OUTREACH

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY & RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT AUTISM

2017

OUTREACH

C E L E B R A T I N G 2 0 Y E A R S

SARRC
Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center

Growing Up TOGETHER

As SARRC celebrates its 20th anniversary, we look back at kids like Eric O’Dell who have grown up with us.

Page 24

REVOLUTION - EVOLUTION
Saluting 7 individuals who have significantly shaped SARRC
Page 28

GRADUATION BUZZ
Initial cohort at First Place Transition Academy prepares to graduate
Page 34

DIAGNOSING AUTISM
SARRC now provides diagnostic services
Page 40
Growing Up With SARRC. The O'Dell family represents one of the first families who completed JumpStart® and Pivotal Response Treatment® with SARRC. Today, Eric is a thriving 8th grader with a bright future.

Leading a Revolution. As SARRC celebrates its 20th anniversary, we recognize key individuals who have made a tremendous impact on the organization, dedicating countless hours to making a difference for families touched by autism.

Meaningful Transitions. The First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARRC, gets ready to graduate the first cohort of students in June 2017.

Jump for Joy. SARRC’s signature JumpStart® program rolls out JumpStart Online, a hybrid program that combines a series of online lessons that families can access at their convenience with in-vivo coaching sessions.

More Than Beans. SARRC’s Beneficial Beans® social enterprise adds a new location at Burton Barr Central Library in downtown Phoenix.

Diagnostic Services. The research team at SARRC can now diagnose autism among individuals of all ages.

We are honored to continue our support of SARRC, leader in autism research and world class provider of education, treatment, support, community outreach and social enterprise.

Jaburg|Wilk• jaburgwilk.com • 602.248.1000
3200 N. Central Ave. Suite 2000 • Phoenix, AZ

Jaburg|Wilk Foundation
working hand in hand to strengthen
Arizona’s community

Let’s get social!
Follow SARRC on social media to stay updated on the latest news and events!
Your Thoughts

Four Years with SARRC Pays Off

Thank you for everything you have done to help our son become the bright, funny, well-behaved young boy he is today.

Words can’t express the deep feelings of gratitude we have for SARRC. These past four years that our son has spent with SARRC have truly been a gift and the opportunity of a lifetime. We look back at where we started and where we are today, and we’re amazed at the progress our son has made.

Thank you for caring for and loving our little boy, and for giving us hope that miracles happen! A great foundation for our son’s life has been set and we thank you for that.

The Forzem Family

Phoenix

Neighborhood Holiday Display Raises Awareness, Donations

Our 13-year-old son, Christopher, collected a donation for SARRC during our Moon Valley neighborhood Christmas celebration. This year he played his cello and was accompanied by neighbors who played their violins. Christopher raised funds for SARRC while doing what he loves, playing music.

One of the reasons Christopher chose to raise funds for SARRC was because he has a younger brother, Connor, who has autism. He went online and researched various organizations and liked the fact that SARRC helps people of all ages with autism, not only children.

Our neighborhood has a yearly Christmas light competition and celebration throughout December and we have now started a tradition of lighting our autism ribbon each year along with our holiday lights.

The Forzem Family

Moon Valley, Ariz.

T

weenty years ago, a pair of dedicated mothers — each with a child with autism — and one of the only development pediatricians in metro Phoenix, came together to confront one related issue: a lack of resources and research available to serve families impacted by autism.

Autism at the time was largely unfamiliar to the community and research was sparse. They were compelled to challenge the status quo, so together they pushed to seek answers, and when they couldn’t find what they were looking for, they launched a resource of their own: the Southwest Autism Research Center (SARRC, now Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, SARRC). In the beginning, SARRC focused primarily on research, training and resources for families with newly diagnosed children.

Years later, SARRC introduced its various intervention programs for school-age kids, teens and adults with autism. Today, we have also grown to become one of the largest nonprofit events in the state, to our programs and services for individuals across the lifespan. We have also challenged ourselves to become more strategic in building partnerships locally, nationally and internationally, and are invested in fostering a more inclusive community.

While we have transformed significantly, our mission has not wavered. We will continue to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families. As we mark our 20th anniversary this year, we look back and celebrate our achievements — and we look ahead to an even more promising future.
We can provide you with a plan to help ensure that the future of the person with special needs is safe and secure.

866.949.6202
SilverTreeSNP.com
Scottsdale | Thousand Oaks | Pasadena
Studio City | San Diego | Las Vegas

We Care • We Listen • We Guide

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE
• Consultation and Planning
• Guardianship/Conservatorship Filing
• Special Needs Trusts
• Financial Planning/Budgeting
• Government Benefits Eligibility, Analysis and Preservation
• Letter of Intent
• Professional Training
• Continuing Education

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

1997
• Southwest Autism Research Center (SARC) is founded.

1998
• SARC’s first campus opens in Phoenix.
• Inaugural Community Breakfast is held.

1999
• SARC’s first education and training workshops are attended by more than 800 people.

2000
• The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 in 150 8-year-old children have ASD.

2001
• SARC families participate in historic study in collaboration with Libera Universita Campus BioMedica in Rome.

2002
• SARC changes its name to Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC).
• SARRC introduces JumpStart®, a program empowering parents with the skills and knowledge to help navigate their new journey.
• FRIEND (Fostering Relationships in Early Network Development) is implemented by SARRC in Arizona elementary schools to help students understand and accept differences among their peers.
• SARRC’s Grandparents Group is established to help educate, empower, and support grandparents of children with autism.

2003
• SARRC partners with the International Autism Genetics Resource Exchange ( AGRE), the largest private, open-access repository of clinical and genetic information dedicated to helping autism research.
• SARRC and Translational Genomics Research Institute partner to conduct Arizona’s largest and most comprehensive molecular and genetics research done on autism.

2004
• The first capital campaign is launched and raises $7.5 million for a new building.
• SARRC’s first education and training workshops are attended by more than 800 people.

Continued
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE continued

2005
• As a result of the 2004 capital campaign, SARRC’s Campus for Exceptional Children in Phoenix opens.

2006
• The SARRC Community School opens its doors, a milestone to create a more inclusive community.
• Walk Now Arizona with Cure Autism Now launches and hosts the first walk, boasting 3,500 participants.
• The CDC estimates that 1 in 110 8-year-old children have ASD.

2007
• SARRC hires first national autism experts with doctoral degrees to expand and enhance services.
• Arizona Autism Coalition is formed to improve the lives of individuals with ASD and their families by sharing resources and affecting autism systems reform through statewide collaboration and advocacy.

2008
• SARRC supports the passing of Steven’s Law, requiring insurance companies to provide coverage for autism treatment.
• SARRC’s CommunityWorks® program is introduced to provide after-school and weekend opportunities for teens with ASD and their typically developing peer mentors.

2009
• GardenWorks® and CulinaryWorks® launch, marking SARRC’s first venture into social enterprise (now Beneficial Beans®).
• First World Autism Awareness Day held on April 2.
• ThinkAsperger’s launches a screening questionnaire for parents, educators and medical professionals to aid in the identification of ASD.

2010
• SARRC launches its social enterprise program, Beneficial Beans®, a proprietary coffee business to provide training and employment opportunities for adults with autism.

2011
• “Combating Autism Reauthorization Act,” enacted in 2008, is reauthorized by President Barack Obama to ensure continual autism research, services, training and monitoring.

2012
• The first Beneficial Beans Café opens inside the Scottsdale Civic Center Library.
• SARRC’s sister organization, First Place, is founded.
• The CDC estimates that 1 in 68 children are affected by autism.

2013
• SARRC collaborates with First Place and the Foundation for Senior Living to launch the First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARRC.
• The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) newly identifies autism as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) folding all subcategories of the condition into one umbrella diagnosis — ASD.

2014
• SARRC collaborates with First Place and the Foundation for Senior Living to launch the First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARRC.
• SARRC’s CommunityWorks program is replicated in Canada.
• Combating Autism Reauthorization Act is renewed for another five years as the “Autism CARES Act.”

2015
• SARRC, in partnership with Behavior Imaging and Georgia Tech, launched Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment (NODA), a clinically tested service using a smartphone app and autism specialists to diagnose or rule out autism.
• SARRC’s Detecting Asperger’s Very Early (DAVE) screening questionnaire is published in the Journal of Applied School Psychology.

2016
• SARRC’s second Community School in Tempe opens.
• SARRC named a “pocket of excellence” by John Donvan and Caren Zucker in their book, In a Different Key.

2017
• Phoenix named “the most autism-friendly city in the world” in a segment produced by “PBS NewsHour.”

2008
• The CDC estimates that 1 in 110 8-year-old children have ASD.

2009
• GardenWorks® and CulinaryWorks® launch, marking SARRC’s first venture into social enterprise (now Beneficial Beans®).
• First World Autism Awareness Day held on April 2.
• ThinkAsperger’s launches a screening questionnaire for parents, educators and medical professionals to aid in the identification of ASD.

2010
• SARRC launches its social enterprise program, Beneficial Beans®, a proprietary coffee business to provide training and employment opportunities for adults with autism.

2011
• “Combating Autism Reauthorization Act,” enacted in 2008, is reauthorized by President Barack Obama to ensure continual autism research, services, training and monitoring.

2012
• The first Beneficial Beans Café opens inside the Scottsdale Civic Center Library.
• SARRC’s sister organization, First Place, is founded.
• The CDC estimates that 1 in 68 children are affected by autism.

2013
• SARRC collaborates with First Place and the Foundation for Senior Living to launch the First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARRC.
• The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) newly identifies autism as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) folding all subcategories of the condition into one umbrella diagnosis — ASD.

2014
• SARRC collaborates with First Place and the Foundation for Senior Living to launch the First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARRC.
• SARRC’s CommunityWorks program is replicated in Canada.
• Combating Autism Reauthorization Act is renewed for another five years as the “Autism CARES Act.”

2015
• SARRC, in partnership with Behavior Imaging and Georgia Tech, launched Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment (NODA), a clinically tested service using a smartphone app and autism specialists to diagnose or rule out autism.
• SARRC’s Detecting Asperger’s Very Early (DAVE) screening questionnaire is published in the Journal of Applied School Psychology.

2016
• SARRC’s second Community School in Tempe opens.
• SARRC named a “pocket of excellence” by John Donvan and Caren Zucker in their book, In a Different Key.
• Phoenix named “the most autism-friendly city in the world” in a segment produced by “PBS NewsHour.”
Amanda Aguirre
Amanda Aguirre, former Arizona State Senator, is currently president and CEO of the Regional Center for Border Health Inc. in Yuma, Ariz. In 2003, Aguirre became the first female and first Hispanic member to represent District 24 in the Arizona House of Representatives and in the Arizona State Senate where she served through 2010.

Mike Bill
Mike Bill joined the MJ Insurance team in 1991. He became president in 2001 and was named CEO in 2006. He is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the firm and has been instrumental in catapulting MJ Insurance to one of the top 100 independent agencies in the country.

Joe Clees
Joe Clees is a founding shareholder of the Phoenix office of Ogletree Deakins, an employment law firm with more than 850 lawyers worldwide. He represents management clients throughout the world and holds many leadership roles within the firm. He has earned multiple accolades over his career, including being recognized as one of the top labor and employment lawyers in the country by multiple publications.

Monica Coury
Monica Coury is the vice president of legislative and government affairs for Centene Corporation, which manages several health plans including Bridgeway Health Solutions, Health Net, Cenpatico Integrated Care and Ambetter from Health Net. Coury has worked extensively in the healthcare sector and has a deep knowledge of health care policy both at the state and federal level.

Ken McElroy
Ken McElroy oversees MC Companies’ asset portfolio and leads the day-to-day operations, including financial and operating analysis, investor relations and business development. A 20-year industry veteran, he has also served in numerous leadership roles in multi-family asset and property management.

Barbara Ralston
Barbara Ralston is the director of strategic initiatives at Homeward Bound, a nonprofit that provides support services and housing to homeless families and those who have experienced domestic violence. She has received several community leadership awards and has served on many local nonprofit boards and committees.
SARRC Receives 4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator

Charity Navigator, a service that evaluates nonprofits and provides donors with important information, once again awarded SARRC a 4-star rating, which is the highest honor. It indicates that SARRC adheres to sector-best practices and fulfills its mission in a financially effective way.

In a letter to SARRC, Charity Navigator President and CEO Michael Thatcher wrote, “This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness.”

First Place® AZ Breaks Ground

SARRC’s sister nonprofit, First Place AZ, broke ground on its new property in December 2016. Denise Reznik, SARRC co-founder, was joined by many community members during the ceremony, including Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, Arizona Department of Housing Director Michael Trailor, First Place Capital Campaign Cabinet Member John Graham, and First Place Board Chair Sara Dial, among others.

The property will have 56 apartments for adults with autism and other neurodiversities, so they are able to gain the skills and experience to live successful, independent lives. Additionally, there will be a transition academy for student residents and a leadership institute for service providers, medical professionals and researchers.

Phoenix Business Leaders Award

SARRC $10,000

More than 1,000 business leaders attended the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce’s Economic Outlook event in late 2016. During the event, in celebration of Cox Charities’ 20th anniversary, attendees were asked to vote for a local charity to receive a $10,000 award.

Voting was open during a portion of the event, where SARRC was listed among 20 other local organizations and was selected to receive the $10,000 award.

SARRC Wins Grand Slam Award

The Arizona Diamondbacks Foundation presented SARRC with a Ken Kendrick Grand Slam Award in the amount of $100,000 for the Arizona Diamondbacks Employment Hub. Funds supported the redevelopment of SARRC’s Employment Services office space as well as programs and services that enable SARRC to reach more employers looking to hire adults with autism.

Governor Signs ABLE Act

In May 2016, Governor Doug Ducey signed House Bill 2388, also known as Arizona’s ABLE Act (Achieving a Better Life Experience), into law. The ABLE Act helps ease the financial strains faced by individuals with disabilities. The bill does this by making tax-free savings accounts available to cover qualified expenses like education and housing.

SARRC’s Residential Transition Academy Director Paige Raetz, Ph.D., BCBA-D, worked closely with advocacy groups to support the creation of the bill.

Thank you to Bashas’ Family of Stores for supporting SARRC throughout the month of April during our third annual “Team Up for Autism” campaign!

Special thanks to our generous partners and shoppers!
Beneficial Beans® Café Opens at Burton Barr

On March 6, SARRC opened its second Beneficial Beans® Café location, nestled inside of Burton Barr Central Library in downtown Phoenix. The café, which is part of SARRC’s social enterprise program, serves coffee and a variety of food items to library visitors and employees. SARRC and the City of Phoenix collaborated for nearly two years to establish the new café. Burton Barr Central Library receives more than 1 million visitors annually, making it an ideal spot for a second location. (Read more about the new café on page 39.)

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT
Beatriz Conti Orr, M.Ed., BCBA
Clinical Services Manager and Hispanic Outreach Coordinator

Beatriz Conti Orr has been with SARRC for nine years. She was introduced to the organization through her mom, a speech therapist, who had come to SARRC for Pivotal Response Treatment™ training.

“At the time, I was thinking about changing jobs and my mom recommended I visit SARRC,” Conti Orr says. “I decided to come in for a tour, and was excited by what I saw.” Conti Orr was impressed with SARRC’s programs and training, so she reached out to the clinical director — now SARRC President and CEO Daniel Openden. As a result, she landed an interview and subsequently was recruited as a JumpStart® clinician working directly with families and assisting in Hispanic outreach efforts.

She now manages several of SARRC’s short-term programs and leads all Hispanic outreach efforts. Conti Orr says the best part of her job is having the opportunity to guide and support clinicians who work directly with families on their journey with autism.

“Every week there is a special moment in our journey of helping others,” Conti Orr says. “My job allows me to make a big impact in the community and it doesn’t get much better than that!”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT
Ken Bodes

Ken Bodes became involved with SARRC when his grandson was diagnosed with autism in 2014.

“My wife and I wondered, ‘What did being on the autism spectrum mean?’ We also wondered what types of challenges we would face as grandparents, not to mention the challenges ahead for our son and daughter-in-law,” Bodes says.

This is when Bodes’ son and daughter-in-law told him and his wife about SARRC’s Grandparents Group. They found the group to be a great support system and resource on the most current information about autism and related subjects.

His involvement with the Grandparents Group started to transform when SARRC requested assistance on various handyman tasks.

Recently, Bodes was instrumental in renovating the Beneficial Beans Café at Burton Barr Central Library. He spent hours caulking counters and sinks, making ceiling repairs, checking electrical outlets for proper voltage and polarities, and restoring the kitchen area so that it was fully operational.

“It’s a real pleasure to work alongside so many committed people where education, learning, teaching and research are shared with anyone who has concerns or questions about autism,” Bodes says.

SARRC Wins BIG YAM to the Rescue

SARRC was selected as the winning nonprofit organization in the BIG YAM to the Rescue campaign, a local competition put on by BIG YAM, The Parsons Agency, offering marketing services to nonprofits in the Phoenix area. SARRC received custom-tailored, data-driven marketing and advertising services valued at $40,000 to help further organizational goals.

PBS Newshour’s ‘A Place in the World’ Airs

John Donvan and Caren Zucker, highly acclaimed journalists from ABC’s Nightline, released a New York Times best-selling book and Pulitzer Prize finalist, “In a Different Key: The Story of Autism,” which documents the history of autism dating back to the first person ever diagnosed. As part of their book tour, Donvan and Zucker visited Phoenix and highlighted a passage from the epilogue of their book, which refers to SARRC as “widely admired” and one of the “pockets of excellence... scattered across the United States.”

In the summer of 2016, Donvan and Zucker reported their findings in a segment titled “A Place in the World,” which aired on “PBS NewsHour” and honored Phoenix as “the most autism-friendly city in the world.”
Let’s talk about managing your risks the right way. Let’s talk about an employee benefit plan that helps you attract and keep the best and brightest. Let us show you why we’ve become one of the largest privately held insurance agencies in America (and one of Business Insurance’s “Best Places to Work”). We promise it’ll be anything but boring.

MJ INSURANCE

mjinsurance.com

Thank you Cydcor for your continued support of SARRC and its mission to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.

Love,
John, Karey, Sienna & Savannah Stevenson

SSP America

The Food Travel Experts

SSP America is a PROUD partner and supporter of SARRC and their mission to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.
Bank of America Charitable Foundation and Walmart Foundation

Bank of America Charitable Foundation and Walmart Foundation each awarded funding to our Social Enterprise Internship program through Beneficial Beans®. The program uses methods and disciplines of business along with the power of the marketplace to generate revenue and create internship opportunities for adults with ASD at the Beneficial Beans Café and Beneficial Beans Garden. Thanks to their significant contributions, SARRC is advancing programmatic operations through the opening of the second Beneficial Beans Café at the Burton Barr Central Library in Phoenix. Together, both cafés and the garden offer a 12-week internship focused on problem solving, communication, and adaptability in the workplace. The internship includes clinical wraparound services, tailored to each intern’s employment goals that include any or all of the following: vocational assessment, career preparation for the school year, complete classroom renovations and train new staff in support of $110,000 granted us the opportunity to advancing economic mobility by investing in issues related to workforce development and education, community development and basic needs. By using their strengths to help others, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation create opportunities for people to live better every day. They are helping people live better by accelerating upward job mobility and economic development for the retail workforce; addressing hunger and making healthier, more sustainably grown food a reality; building strong communities where they operate; and inspiring associates to give back.

Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

Since 2005, SARRC has operated the state’s leading inclusive preschool where children with ASD learn alongside typically developing children in a group-based, 1:1 ratio model. This past year, one of the state’s most prominent foundations, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, supported our program’s expansion efforts when we opened our Tempe campus. SARRC’s Community School is recognized as a high-quality early childhood education preschool provider focused on building motivation and social-communication skills. Our program prepares every child for success in kindergarten and beyond by creating individualized curriculum goals based on the Arizona Early Learning Standards. Piper Trust’s support of $50,000 granted us the opportunity to complete classroom renovations and train new staff in preparation for the school year. Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust supports organizations that enrich health, well-being and opportunity for the people of Maricopa County, Ariz. Piper Trust concentrates its efforts in six areas: healthcare education, and religious research, children, older adults, arts and culture, education, and religious organizations.

Join a LEGACY

SARRC Legacy Circle Members

Nell & Lynn Balter
Timothy & Diane Bolden
Kathy & Mike Bosco
Joseph & Terese Copen
Dan & Paula Coleman
Jim Corzine
Dave & Peggy Cottle
Patti & Herb Dreneszun
Essential Nourishment
Nicole M. Goodwin
Meighan Harahan
Tom & Kathleen Harris
J.W. Holmes
Melissa & Sean Hsmoe
Gary Jaburg
Claire and Brian Kelley
Jeni & Brent Kendle
Rob & Trudy Lloyd
Cathy Luebke
Helen & Raun Melmed
Addie & Joe Mooca
Tim & Sarah Newquist
Erica & Daniel Openden
Dan and Kim Owens
Socrates & Stephanie Papadopoulos
Craig O. Pearson
Rob & Denise Resnik Family Trust
Phyllis & Howard Rosfeld
Beth & Charles Salazar
Debbie & Mark Schwartz
Ken & Heidi Scott
Howard & Wendi Sobelman
Karen Starbowski
Sunshine Trust
Daron Sutton
Deseree & Greg Wells
Anonymous (6)

We apologize for any omissions due to the printing deadline.
Then and Now: A Look at Autism Over the Last 20 Years

What is the prevalence of autism among children in the United States? In 1997, autism was on the rise and so were people’s concerns, yet there were no dedicated efforts to monitor prevalence rates. Rough estimates suggested that 1 in 2,500 children were likely to be diagnosed with autism. In the year 2000, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began carefully tracking prevalence rates through the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network. Today, the CDC reports that one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

What is the average age children are receiving an autism diagnosis? The estimated average age of diagnosis in the United States was 4 years, 4 months in 1997. While parental concerns were noted in earlier development, it was more common for children to be identified and diagnosed upon reaching school age. Currently, the CDC states the average age of diagnosis in the U.S. is 3 years, 10 months. However, research has shown that a reliable diagnosis of autism can be made as early as 2 years old.

What are the expected outcomes for adults with autism? When SARRC was founded in 1997, very little was known about outcomes for adults with autism; the prevalence of autism was continually increasing, but long-term expectations were unclear. While many large care facilities closed in the 1980s, it was not uncommon for institutionalization to be suggested as part of the care of people with autism. Children who were diagnosed in 1997 are young adults now, and places like SARRC are working to build and shape inclusive employment and educational opportunities. According to a 2015 National Autism Indicators Report, only 32 percent of adults with autism had a job for pay outside of the home within the first two years after leaving high school.

How have diagnostic criteria changed in the past 20 years? Autistic disorder, Asperger’s disorder and pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) were three distinct developmental disorders with different diagnostic criteria, namely a lack of significant language delay in individuals with Asperger’s and an atypical onset or atypical presentation of autism associated with PDD. The division between these three developmental disorders often caused issues related to access to services as well as general care.

In 2013, the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) newly identified autism as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) folding all subcategories of the condition into one umbrella diagnosis, where autistic disorder, Asperger’s disorder and PDD are no longer considered separate conditions.

Entonces y ahora: Vista del autismo en los últimos 20 años

¿Cuáles son los resultados esperados para adultos con autismo? Cuando SARRC fue fundada en 1997, muy poco era conocido sobre los resultados para adultos con autismo; el predominio de autismo estaba aumentando continuamente, pero las expectativas a largo plazo eran poco claras. Mientras muchas instalaciones de cuidado grandes cerraron en los años 80’s, no era extraño que instituciones fueran recomendadas como parte del cuidado para personas con autismo. Niños diagnosticados en 1997 son ahora adultos jóvenes, y lugares como SARRC están trabajando para construir y formar empleos y oportunidades educacionales más inclusivas. Acorde al Reporte Nacional de Indicadores de Autismo, sólo 32 por ciento de adultos con autismo tienen empleo con pago fuera de casa en los primeros dos años después de terminar la secundaria.

¿Cómo ha cambiado el criterio de diagnóstico en los últimos 20 años? Desorden autista, desorden de Asperger y Trastorno generalizado del desarrollo (PDD) eran considerados tres desórdenes del desarrollo distintos. Cada uno tenía un criterio de diagnóstico diferente, como por ejemplo la falta de retraso de lenguaje en individuos con Asperger’s y un comienzo atípico o presentación atípica de autismo asociada con PDD. La división entre estos tres desórdenes del desarrollo a menudo causó problemas relacionados al acceso de servicios como también a cuidado general.

En 1993, la quinta edición del DSM identificó al autismo como “trastorno del espectro autista” (ASD) combinando todas las subcategorías de la condición en un mismo diagnóstico. Como resultado, desorden autista, síndrome de Asperger y PDD no son considerados condiciones distintas.

Then and Now: A Look at Autism Over the Last 20 Years

What is the prevalence of autism among children in the United States? In 1997, autism was on the rise and so were people’s concerns, yet there were no dedicated efforts to monitor prevalence rates. Rough estimates suggested that 1 in 2,500 children were likely to be diagnosed with autism. In the year 2000, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began carefully tracking prevalence rates through the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network. Today, the CDC reports that one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

What is the average age children are receiving an autism diagnosis? The estimated average age of diagnosis in the United States was 4 years, 4 months in 1997. While parental concerns were noted in earlier development, it was more common for children to be identified and diagnosed upon reaching school age. Currently, the CDC states the average age of diagnosis in the U.S. is 3 years, 10 months. However, research has shown that a reliable diagnosis of autism can be made as early as 2 years old.

What are the expected outcomes for adults with autism? When SARRC was founded in 1997, very little was known about outcomes for adults with autism; the prevalence of autism was continually increasing, but long-term expectations were unclear. While many large care facilities closed in the 1980s, it was not uncommon for institutionalization to be suggested as part of the care of people with autism. Children who were diagnosed in 1997 are young adults now, and places like SARRC are working to build and shape inclusive employment and educational opportunities. According to a 2015 National Autism Indicators Report, only 32 percent of adults with autism had a job for pay outside of the home within the first two years after leaving high school.

How have diagnostic criteria changed in the past 20 years? Autistic disorder, Asperger’s disorder and pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) were three distinct developmental disorders with different diagnostic criteria, namely a lack of significant language delay in individuals with Asperger’s and an atypical onset or atypical presentation of autism associated with PDD. The division between these three developmental disorders often caused issues related to access to services as well as general care.

In 2013, the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) newly identified autism as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) folding all subcategories of the condition into one umbrella diagnosis, where autistic disorder, Asperger’s disorder and PDD are no longer considered separate conditions.

Entonces y ahora: Vista del autismo en los últimos 20 años

¿Cuáles son los resultados esperados para adultos con autismo? Cuando SARRC fue fundada en 1997, muy poco era conocido sobre los resultados para adultos con autismo; el predominio de autismo estaba aumentando continuamente, pero las expectativas a largo plazo eran poco claras. Mientras muchas instalaciones de cuidado grandes cerraron en los años 80’s, no era extraño que instituciones fueran recomendadas como parte del cuidado para personas con autismo. Niños diagnosticados en 1997 son ahora adultos jóvenes, y lugares como SARRC están trabajando para construir y formar empleos y oportunidades educacionales más inclusivas. Acorde al Reporte Nacional de Indicadores de Autismo, sólo 32 por ciento de adultos con autismo tienen empleo con pago fuera de casa en los primeros dos años después de terminar la secundaria.

¿Cómo ha cambiado el criterio de diagnóstico en los últimos 20 años? Desorden autista, desorden de Asperger y Trastorno generalizado del desarrollo (PDD) eran considerados tres desórdenes del desarrollo distintos. Cada uno tenía un criterio de diagnóstico diferente, como por ejemplo la falta de retraso de lenguaje en individuos con Asperger’s y un comienzo atípico o presentación atípica de autismo asociada con PDD. La división entre estos tres desórdenes del desarrollo a menudo causó problemas relacionados al acceso de servicios como también a cuidado general.

En 1993, la quinta edición del DSM identificó al autismo como “trastorno del espectro autista” (ASD) combinando todas las subcategorías de la condición en un mismo diagnóstico. Como resultado, desorden autista, síndrome de Asperger y PDD no son considerados condiciones distintas.
HERE'S TO THOSE WHO STOP AT NOTHING.

BIG YAM is proud to support SARRC in their mission to advance research and provide a lifetime of support for individuals with autism and their families.

A Checklist for Parents of a Newly Diagnosed Child

Receiving a diagnosis of autism for your child can be an overwhelming experience no matter what age your child is diagnosed. While you may be wondering what to do first, it is important that you begin the process of accessing services for your child. Here are some steps to get you and your family started on the road to success. Please contact SARRC at 602.340.8717 for more information.

**Obtain a Formal Diagnosis**
An assessment and report written by a psychologist, psychiatrist or developmental pediatrician is necessary for many funding agencies and service providers. Call SARRC and ask about their Diagnostic Services.

**Educate Yourself**
Attend one of SARRC’s Family Orientation meetings to learn about available resources, SARRC services, and get answers to questions you may have about autism treatment.

**Enroll in JumpStart®**
JumpStart® is a parent empowerment program for families of children under the age of 6 diagnosed with autism or at risk for autism. SARRC clinicians provide information and individual coaching to each family with a focus on Pivotal Response Treatment®, an evidence-based intervention.

**Identify Funding Sources**
Contact your health insurance provider to determine if you have coverage for applied behavior analysis (ABA) services. You may also be eligible for government funded services, which vary based on your child’s age.

**Participate in Your Child’s Education**
Federal law sets educational standards for children with special needs. Talk to your child’s school about the diagnosis and the need for an individualized education plan (IEP).

**Organize Your Child’s Records**
Take the time to organize your child’s developmental history and medical and educational records. You will need these records for most funding agencies and service providers and a good record-keeping system will save you time and effort.

**Begin Evidence-Based Intervention**
Autism interventions supported by the most scientific evidence are based on applied behavior analysis (ABA). Ensure ABA is a central component to your child’s treatment program.

**Take Time for Yourself**
Taking care of your health is crucial as you are your child’s best advocate. Take time for yourself to relax, accept any help that may be offered and identify some areas that would be of benefit to suggest if people ask.

Celebrating the differences that make us stronger.

Aetna is proud to support the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC).

Thank you for supporting our community.
Eric is your typical teenager. His feet kick in some pretty rad shoes, he’s got an endless list of stories about good times with his friends, and he’s looking forward to school being out for the summer.

There are also some amazing things that set Eric apart. He’s captivated an audience on stage for both school and community theater programs, often singing under a pretty bright spotlight. He’s also first chair viola for his school’s orchestra.

And then there’s his autism diagnosis.

For Eric, the road to being an involved student looking forward to high school was paved with a lot of hard work—work he didn’t do alone. When he was diagnosed with autism just before his third birthday, his mom, Cindy, spent a week resisting the new reality autism put in her family’s lap. It was through a parent training session she attended at SARRC in 2005 that shook her from her denial. After that, they all got busy.

“I think what my time at SARRC really gave me, was it helped me live a basic, normal life that any boy would want to live. It was about learning to interact and having friends.”

While SARRC celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, the O’Dell family is celebrating too. One of the first families to join SARRC’s JumpStart® program and participate in Pivotal Response Treatment® (PRT) training, Eric O’Dell in effect grew up with the organization. And much like the team of professionals who helped him learn and grow along the way, he’s ready to take center stage and show the world just what people with autism can do.
TIME TO WORK

The O’Dells first stop was SARRC’s JumpStart* program, which had recently been introduced as a resource providing state-of-the-art information, support and training to families with children recently diagnosed or at risk for ASD. They were one of the first families to complete the program as SARRC’s then new campus, and those first few weeks set the tone for the next several years.

“I remember there were still boxes in the lobby,” Cindy O’Dell says. “We literally just jumped on it. We learned how to advocate for our son, and if there was a training to take, we did it.”

During their time at SARRC, the O’Dells participated in everything from the organization’s More Than Words* program, aimed at helping parents better understand their child’s communication, to music and occupational therapies. Every little thing they did was making a difference, but it wasn’t the leaps and bounds the family was hoping for.

Then Eric and Cindy were asked if they’d like to participate in a new training SARRC was offering, one that required commitment from child and parent to learn and adapt. Called Pivotal Response Treatment® (PRT), this method was being presented by a special guest, Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D, who would soon become SARRC’s clinical director and who now leads the organization as president and CEO.

“Cindy O’Dell really embraced this model,” Dr. Openden says. “This is why it’s so important to involve the parent in this. Nobody is more motivated to help their child than a parent. They want to know that they are doing everything they can.”

THE DIFFERENCE MAKER

PRT is intensive. It’s an approach that aims to help the child with ASD increase their functional communication skills while decreasing disruptive behaviors. Interactions are observed, and patterns are recognized to uncover opportunities to redirect a child, to teach them the best ways to communicate their needs and to interact. The ultimate goal for most parents, including the O’Dells, is to see their child participating in mainstream classrooms, activities, social groups and more. And as Dr. Openden says, it’s the parent’s commitment that often translates to the most positive results.

“PRT changed everything for Eric,” Cindy says. “Inclusion was always so important to us. I wanted him to be mainstreamed when he got to elementary school, but my worry was what it would be like for him on the playground, or being able to eat with someone rather than gravitating to sitting alone.”

Cindy continued to work with Eric, mainstreaming him on SARRC’s recommendation, but with fair warning that it would be hard, but not impossible. Even now, almost 10 years later, Eric remembers his first time making new friends.

“There was this thing I would do, inviting other kids to draw with chalk with me,” Eric says, recalling a friend technique he’d learned, taking something he enjoyed to give him something in common with his peers. him to be mainstreamed when he got to elementary school, but my worry was what it would be like for him on the playground, or being able to eat with someone rather than gravitating to sitting alone.”

Cindy continued to work with Eric, mainstreaming him on SARRC’s recommendation, but with fair warning that it would be hard, but not impossible. Even now, almost 10 years later, Eric remembers his first time making new friends.

“There was this thing I would do, inviting other kids to draw with chalk with me,” Eric says, recalling a friend technique he’d learned, taking something he enjoyed to give him something in common with his peers.

“Music is sort of a language everyone can speak,” Eric says. “And the people who are in theater never have a reason to be mean. Drama people are very understanding. Drama and music just make me who I am.”
BY STEPHANIE R. CONNER • GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN • STEPHANIE JARNAGAN

AS SARRC CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY, WE SALUTE THE REVOLUTIONISTS WHO HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR MUCH OF OUR SUCCESS OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES. THESE INDIVIDUALS HAVE DEDICATED COUNTLESS HOURS TO STRENGTHENING SARRC, ENABLING US TO SERVE MORE CHILDREN, ADULTS AND FAMILIES IMPACTED BY AUTISM. THEY HAVE REDEFINED THE STATUS QUO, RESULTING IN A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL OF US.

DENISE D. RESNIK

For a parent, having a child diagnosed with autism comes with an entirely new reality—one often filled at first with denial, then heartbreak. When Denise Resnik’s son, Matthew, was diagnosed with autism in the early 1990s, she quickly discovered that accepting the life-changing news was only the beginning, and what loomed after was the impossible task of figuring out what to do next.

After navigating through the tangled web of scarce resources to put her son on a path that would help him get the vital therapies and care he needed, Resnik found a community of parents all feeling the same weight of helplessness standing in the way. Together with fellow autism parent, Cindy Schneider, and developmental pediatrician, Dr. Raun Melmed, Resnik founded a virtual resource center aimed to put parents in touch with the information they so desperately sought after. This center grew to a building, and soon the Southwest Autism Research Center was born.

Since its humble beginning, Resnik, a prominent Valley businesswoman, has stood at the helm to guide SARRC into more areas, including research and medical studies. Last year, she appointed a new president of DRA Collective, became CEO of her 30-year old agency and also became president/CEO of the new nonprofit she founded in 2012—First Place®AZ, a uniquely concepted residential and community development for adults with autism and other special abilities. In late 2016, its first property, First Place-Phoenix, broke ground in the heart the city at Third Street and Catalina Drive. Opening is slated for spring 2018.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON SARRC’S BEGINNINGS AND SEE WHAT IT HAS BECOME NOW? We should never underestimate what dedicated parents and compassionate leaders can dream and do! Thanks to SARRC, we have allowed families and individuals impacted by autism to dream bigger, benefiting from more choices and options, and have set a big stage for others to experience the value of people with autism and other neuro-diversities. Our population of differently abled individuals continues teaching us some very important lessons and bringing

Continued on next page

OUTREACH | 28 | 2017

20 YEARS
SARRC

REVOLUTIONISTS
our greater compassion and kindness in our community benefiting from more choices and options, and have set a big stage for others to experience the value of people with autism and other neuro-diversities. Our population of differently abled individuals continues teaching us very important lessons and bringing out greater compassion and kindness in our community.

**WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ACCOMPLISHING FOR SARRC?**

I'm most proud of how we're achieving our early mission to “support individuals with autism and their families throughout their lifetimes, while advancing discoveries” and the remarkable people attracted to SARRC, who together have created “the most autism-friendly city in the world,” according to PBS NewsHour.

**HOW HAS SARRC IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?**

SARRC and now its sister nonprofit, First Place AZ, have given me peace of mind. For years, I struggled with how best to help our son Matt, how to support him in his adult life and how to ensure he is safe, happy and healthy when we’re no longer able to care for him. It’s difficult, if not impossible, to answer those looming questions alone, but thanks to SARRC and First Place, more families, more leaders and more members of our community are recognizing the importance of the cause, the celebration of neuro-diversity and the powerful contributions each of us can make.

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH SARRC?**

Do it and don’t delay SARRC and First Place, as sister nonprofits, have created a super highway, fortified by many on-ramps for ways to benefit people impacted by autism and engage the broader community. Support in all areas is needed. Consider what you can do to employ or mentor individuals or organize employees or your family to volunteer; or what you can do to advocate for our cause and/or raise much-needed resources to advance our programs and activities. We’ve built SARRC one person, donor, employee, volunteer, educator and collaborator at a time. Together, we’ve built a very supportive community and are modeling what’s possible here for communities everywhere!

**RAUN MELMED, M.D.**

With more than three decades dedicated to helping children affected by behavioral, educational and developmental disabilities, Dr. Raun Melmed can look back on his work and know he’s made a difference. But instead, he’d rather look at it all as just getting started.

Having worked with families for years and seeing an enormous need for autism support and dedicated research, in 1997 he partnered with two fellow Phoenixians and mothers of children with autism, Denise Resnik and Cindy Schneider, to form the Southwest Autism Research Center. The organization has since added the Resource part to its name and, under Dr. Melmed’s tenure, has grown into a leader in autism-related studies.

Between his work as SARRC medical director and his continued work as a developmental and behavioral pediatrician as well as director at the Melmed Center, he has also co-authored two books and authored or co-authored more than 70 publications.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON SARRC’S BEGINNINGS AND SEE WHAT IT HAS BECOME NOW?**

In 1996, sitting around my desk, I sensed a void. More and more children were being diagnosed with autism and there were no well-defined diagnostic treatments, let alone any family resources. So many questions, so few answers. The sense of urgency was compelling. We had to rise to the occasion and seize the day. It certainly helped to work with my energy-charged co-founders for whom complacency was just not an option. Make a stand, follow your heart, keep the cause central to all that you do. If we build it, we decided, they will come!

**WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ACCOMPLISHING FOR SARRC?**

SARRC has served as a lens through which individual differences can be identified, treated and celebrated. The JumpStart® parent empowerment program has changed the lives of so many individuals and their families, but possibly more importantly, SARRC has served to raise the consciousness of our entire community so that individuals with disabilities can be accepted, appreciated, valued and included. It takes a village and Phoenix has risen to the task!

**HOW HAS SARRC IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?**

I was in the right place at the right time, with the right people and the right knowledge. Call it luck, but with the nexus of forces, something far greater than we could ever have imagined came into existence. SARRC is my proudest professional accomplishment. Knowing that the spirit on which it was founded, the values that it embodied and the service that it provides will all live on, is so gratifying. It is my legacy.

**KATHY BOSCO**

When Kathy Bosco’s grandson, Zach, was diagnosed with autism at 1.5 years old in 1997, she immediately searched for resources to help her and her husband better understand this new journey. Soon after, she discovered SARRC and offered to volunteer so she could learn as much as she could about the ins and outs of autism.

Bosco wanted to provide support to other grandparents of grandchildren with autism, so in 2002 she helped form SARRC’s Grandparents Support Group. Today, SARRC’s Grandparents Group is thriving and has impacted more than 450 members. Monthly themed meetings – organized by the now 81-year-old Bosco – are held from October through May and are attended by approximately 60-70 members.

“It’s a passion of mine to help other grandparents in similar situations so they, too, can feel educated, involved and empowered about autism,” Bosco says.

Her grandson recently completed his first semester of college at her alma mater, Michigan State University (MSU). Her husband, Mike, also attended MSU, so their grandson’s attendance at MSU is a point of great family pride. Kathy and Mike have supported the university’s efforts to develop a dynamic autism study program modeled after SARRC’s Community School and various clinical services. MSU students learn to teach children with autism using evidence-based techniques. Their contributions have supported the development of two centers, with a third in the works.

“Autism has profoundly impacted our lives, but by getting involved and helping where we can, we feel like we are making a difference for not only our grandson but for the many children being diagnosed with autism today,” Bosco says.

**WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF ACCOMPLISHING FOR SARRC?**

To my knowledge, there is no other Grandparents Group like us in the U.S. And we are the only dedicated volunteer group at SARRC. The group has been such a positive resource for me and I’ve learned so much about autism and how research and treatment have progressed over the years. I am also proud that we’re working with individuals and groups in both Canada and Atlanta who are trying to replicate our group in their communities.

**HOW HAS SARRC IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?**

Our journey with autism has been a second life; not one we chose, but one that has profoundly impacted us and SARRC has been a huge part of it. Thank you to Zach, our grandson, for opening doors for us to grow.

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH SARRC?**

Give of your time and your interests. Fill in where there’s a need. You will learn so much through observation. I started volunteering for SARRC filing paperwork almost two decades ago. I have learned so much about autism and the inspirational people who work every day to make a difference for those impacted by the disorder.
At the time, McMahon was the owner of McMahon Restaurant Group, which managed several local Outback restaurants. With the support of his company, he ran the annual concert for 15 years, raising significant funds for SARRC in that time.

“There was a sense of panic about autism. We didn’t know what it was,” says McMahon. “But Patty wanted more,” Dr. Smith says. “We were there for her, as a support group.”

Over the course of the next decade, Lynn and Neil played an instrumental role in SARRC’s trajectory, as well as the national autism landscape, lobbying in D.C. on behalf of families impacted by autism and screening schools using the questionnaire. Today, SARRC is advocating for universal screenings in schools using the questionnaire.

“It doesn’t mean the child is on the spectrum,” Dion says. “But if we have this indicator that there is a social delay, we can address that.” Early intervention could mean the world of difference for children with Asperger’s and their families.

“Patty kept pushing,” Smith says. “And now, we could one day have universal screening in every school in the nation.”

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH SARRC?

“We’re always looking for help! The more the merrier – especially with the walk. Get involved in some way and give back.”

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH SARRC?

“Do it. It’s a great organization—a great group of people. Autism is rampant, and we need to look into all kinds of reasons why. But until then, we need to help those kids and help make their lives better.”
First Place–Phoenix
Groundbreaking

Last December, First Place®AZ made headlines as the nonprofit broke ground on its first residential mixed-use property. Local community leaders, current First Place students, family, friends and First Place AZ and SARRC staff came together to celebrate this milestone for both Phoenix and the autism community.

The event consisted of speeches by Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, Arizona Department of Housing Director Michael Trailor, First Place AZ Capital Campaign Cabinet Member John Graham, First Place Board Chair Sara Dial, and First Place CEO/Founder and SARRC Co-Founder Denise D. Resnik. The development of First Place–Phoenix and the nonprofit’s inaugural location buoys the city’s innovative and autism-friendly reputation.

The property has three major components: apartments, transition academy and leadership institute. The apartments will consist of 56 studio, one-, two- and four-bedroom units. The two-year First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARRC, will be open to 32 students who will live both on and off campus.

The First Place Leadership Institute will serve as a site for research and training for service providers, professionals and physicians. Construction on the First Place–Phoenix has already begun, and the grand opening is set for spring 2018. For more information, visit firstplaceaz.org.

In June, the First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARRC, will hold its inaugural graduation ceremony. Three students from the academy’s first cohort take their next steps toward living successful, independent lives. The skills they have gained and lessons learned in the Transition Academy have prepared them for a bright future.

When the students entered the academy, there was a lot to learn about each other and the staff, their personalities and their individual experiences. There was also a great deal of room to grow with employers and the community to develop new employment opportunities and form a compassionate environment for the students.

“Our initial cohort definitely helped shape the program,” Transition Academy Instructor Brad Herron-Valenzuela says. “They have contributed to our ongoing partnerships with employers, retail partners and enhancing the curriculum.”

Graduate Ian McCoy is proud to have been one of the students to help make the program what it is today.

“As a student of the academy, I feel like I’ve been able to help with progress made and serve as a role model to the other students,” McCoy says.

First-year Transition Academy student, Raylee Barradas, says it’s been nice to learn from the soon-to-be graduates about how the program works, and looks forward to helping incoming students as a mentor herself.

“It has been a thrilling and incredibly impactful experience to watch our students grow into their self-determined and inclusive lives,” Residential Transition Academy Director Paige Raetz, Ph.D., BCBA-D says. “They have taught us so much about how to best serve the learners in our program and we are extremely proud of their tremendous growth.”

Each student who graduates this summer plans to move into their own apartment and continue working where they are currently employed, as well as continue their education and job training.

“I’m eager to graduate. I plan to move to Tempe with another student and continue working,” McCoy says.

First Place Transition Academy partners like GateWay Community College, Foundation for Senior Living and 29 Palms, have also been instrumental in providing students with a strong, inclusive community.

“These inclusive opportunities provided by our partners allow students to realize and accomplish their hopes, dreams and goals,” Herron-Valenzuela says.

As these students graduate and a new cohort starts, so do new opportunities for the First Place Transition Academy.

“We look forward to collaborating with community partners to create greater inclusion in our community, continuing to expand our volunteer and employment partners, and of course, empower our participants,” Herron-Valenzuela says.

Raetz and Herron-Valenzuela say it will be bittersweet to watch the first students cross the stage as they graduate and move on with their lives, but they are confident these students can accomplish anything they want because of the skills gained over the past two years.

“Our hope is that graduates continue to realize and accomplish their goals of living independently and contributing to their communities,” Dr. Raetz says. “We are eager to watch them continue to grow.”
Your time matters. That’s why we move quickly to help you capitalize on every opportunity.

We are relationship-focused and highly responsive, bringing you deep local roots, expert bankers, access to decision makers, flexible solutions and a real commitment to superior service. All part of Western Alliance Bancorporation, one of the country’s top-performing banking companies, which ranks #4 on the Forbes 2017 “Best Banks in America” list.

Alliance Bank of Arizona, a division of Western Alliance Bank. Member FDIC.

602.389.3500 alliancebankofarizona.com

Lincoln Strategy Group congratulates SARRC on 20 years of service to the community! We are honored to have a small part in the Revolution to help those living with autism reach their fullest potential.

Lincoln Strategy Group is a full-service campaign management company that specializes in both corporate and political campaigns to affect public policy.

Snell & Wilmer is proud to support the 19th Annual SARRC Community Breakfast.

Understanding what makes you unique.* www.swlaw.com

ONE ARIZONA CENTER | 400 EAST VAN BUREN STREET | SUITE 1900 | PHOENIX, AZ 85004
DENVER | LAS VEGAS | LOS ANGELES | LOS CABOS | ORANGE COUNTY
PHOENIX | RENO | SALT LAKE CITY | TUCSON

When Amy and Keith Chan’s son, Steven, was diagnosed with autism at around 12 months, their doctor provided them with a list of resources to start their journey. SARRC was included on their list for its parent training program, JumpStart.

“When Steven was diagnosed, it was overwhelming and terrifying,” Amy says. “But after enrolling in JumpStart, the calm, honest manner and incredible knowledge gave me the first real peace after his diagnosis.”

The Chans’ JumpStart experience proved successful for Steven, whose language and social skills developed tremendously. But for busy families like the Chans, making the trip to SARRC’s campus twice a week can be a challenge.

In an effort to create more flexibility for families, SARRC is introducing JumpStart Online, a hybrid model based on the original JumpStart program, in summer 2017.

“What makes this new platform so exciting for us, is that families will be able to access portions of our JumpStart program remotely,” says Beatriz Conti Orr, M.Ed., BCBA, clinical manager at SARRC. “While we’ve transformed the program to be more accessible, lessons will still follow an organized schedule on the most critical topics for families of newly diagnosed children as well as individualized treatment during in-person, one-on-one coaching sessions.”

Through scheduled online sessions, parents will learn important information, such as the characteristics of autism, evidence-based interventions, and navigating systems in order to access services for their child.

For five weeks, families participate in two online lessons a week and are required to attend an in-person session once a week at SARRC’s Campus for Exceptional Children in Phoenix. The in-person session allows clinicians to coach parents one-on-one with their child, give clarity on lessons learned through the online modules, as well as provide help with the implementation of effective interventions to teach their child.

“JumpStart Online will help more families access the help and tools they need, and it will allow more family members to be involved in their child’s progress,” Conti Orr says. “With this hybrid model, SARRC will be able to reduce long waitlists, and best of all, offer JumpStart to families who may not have had the opportunity otherwise.”

For more information about JumpStart Online, call 602.340.8717 or visit autismcenter.org

OUTREACH | 36 | 2017

2017 | 37 | OUTREACH
SARRC and the City of Phoenix celebrate a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Beneficial Beans® Café in Burton Barr Central Library.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN G. DREISESZUN/VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHERS

This spring, SARRC opened its second Beneficial Beans® Café location inside of the Burton Barr Central Library in central Phoenix. The social enterprise offers young adults with autism the chance to participate in a job-training program to prepare them for community-based employment. The grand opening was celebrated by a proclamation from Governor Doug Ducey declaring March 6 “SARRC’s Social Enterprise Day.”

“Our new café at Burton Barr Library gives us the opportunity to double the number of adults with autism we serve on an annual basis and to broaden awareness about SARRC, the services we offer to the community and about autism in general,” says Kate Thoene, social enterprise director. “The new café also gives us the space we need to provide catering services, which will help generate a new source of revenue for us.”

“The skills that I learned [during my internship] were social skills, how to make friends and how to work better with the public,” says Kristopher, a former Beneficial Beans intern.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, Phoenix City Librarian Rita Hamilton explained that the library system and SARRC have a history that makes the new location an ideal fit. The two organizations have worked together as part of SARRC’s Library Works® program, where teens with autism volunteer alongside typically developing teens at the library.

“For the first time in more than six years, we are able offer café services to our customers at Burton Barr Central Library with the opening of Beneficial Beans,” Hamilton says. “This is more than just a café service for us, Phoenix Public Library and SARRC are long-time collaborators. For years, locations throughout Phoenix Public Library have worked with SARRC to create learning and work opportunities for individuals with autism. We are honored that Burton Barr Central Library is part of SARRC’s exciting new chapter.”

Beneficial Beans Café allows SARRC’s clinical team the opportunity to work with interns to develop skills in a natural business environment. In part due to its Social Enterprise programs, 75 percent of adults served by SARRC hold competitive jobs in the community.

WHEN YOU GO

Beneficial Beans Café, located inside of Burton Barr Library at 1221 N. Central Ave. in Phoenix, is open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and serves coffee and a variety of food items to library visitors and employees. Learn more at bbcafe.org.
Ready to Launch

Until this year, SARRC’s research department conducted assessments for various research projects. While they had significant expertise, the staff didn’t have the credentialing needed to provide a clinical diagnosis.

“The turning point was a new research project that required us to provide clinical diagnoses. We had to build the staff for that project,” says Vice President and Research Director Dr. Christopher J. Smith, Ph.D. “Now we have a highly trained staff of licensed clinical psychologists performing assessments for research purposes. So with the credentialed staff on board it made sense to offer this service.”

SARRC also offers treatment services across the lifespan from early intervention to programs for helping adults with autism live more independently. After diagnosis, SARRC clinicians help families find the right services.

The Diagnosis Process

A team at SARRC conducts the evaluation, which typically takes about four to six hours.

“While other centers often split this up, we try to be as efficient as possible,” Dr. Smith says. “We want this to evolve into a very efficient approach so more families are served sooner.”

The appointment begins with an in-depth medical and personal history. Then, the person being evaluated is further assessed by a psychologist, while another staff member conducts a structured interview with a parent/caregiver that addresses interactions with others, specific behavior in certain situations and, for children, how they play. In Brian’s case, both his wife and his mom were interviewed.

Some initial feedback is provided the same day, but a more complete feedback session is scheduled within one to two weeks. A comprehensive report that summarizes the data collected at the evaluation explains the diagnosis, and provides the documentation necessary to seek treatment.

All Ages Welcome

There are a variety of places in the Valley where you can receive an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis. So why SARRC?

“We have significant expertise and strengths in assessing individuals with autism,” Dr. Smith says. “We’ve assessed people of all ages for research purposes for years. It’s what we do.”

The Muellers learned with their son that wait lists were long for kids, but they struggled to find anyone who could diagnose an adult on the spectrum.

Whether it’s a toddler with developmental delays, a teen you’re concerned isn’t meshes well with her peers, or an adult of any age who’s curious, SARRC is here for you.

“We see people of any age. That’s the strength we bring to the table,” Dr. Smith says. “That’s what we can do better than anyone else.”

With Brian’s diagnosis, he’s able to truly tell his son, now 15, that he understands what he’s going through.

“It actually opens some doors at work. I’ve changed jobs frequently instead of asking for things I need,” he says. “I want to stop moving around and stay settled down.” Now he’s asking to move his desk because it’s in a high-traffic area that isn’t optimal for him, instead of leaving that job for yet another one.

What’s more, Michelle says, their family members with young children with developmental delays also are able to see what’s possible—a job, a spouse, children, a life. “They see that their kids can be OK,” Michelle says.

And for Michelle, the diagnosis has given her new context and a better understanding of her husband’s behaviors and needs. “I know how his brain is processing information,” she explains. “The quality of Brian’s life going forward will be better because we have that understanding of exactly what’s going on.”
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.

Great Minds. Great Hearts. Great Community.

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.

Nicole M. Goodwin
Greenberg Traurig, LLP
2375 East Camelback Road | Suite 700
Phoenix, AZ 85016 | 602.445.8000

Cenpatico Integrated Care and Health Net Access congratulate SARRC on their 20 years of service to the community!

We are proud to be part of your *Revolution* and support all that you do to help individuals and families live better lives.

*Powered by Love* — 2017 Autism Speaks Walk in Partnership with SARRC

The 2017 Autism Speaks Walk in Partnership with SARRC theme “Powered by Love” could not be more appropriate for returning walk team, Team Blain. April and Brad Tucker started Team Blain in honor of their son Blain, who was diagnosed with autism at 3.5 years old. Team Blain was inspired by the importance of family, friends, love and determination. Early on in their son’s diagnosis, SARRC, along with several local healthcare professionals, gave the Tuckers an understanding of how to navigate the next steps in their journey with autism.

Through creating a team for the Autism Speaks Walk in Partnership with SARRC, the Tuckers found a network of support that allowed them to raise awareness for their son, in addition to raising $14,000 that will help support other families impacted by autism.

“Every family affected by autism has a different experience and unique needs, however, we are all very similar in our journey,” April says.

Early on in their fundraising efforts, the Tuckers realized they couldn’t do it alone and attribute their 2016 fundraising successes to their dynamic network of family and friends.

For teams looking to boost their networks, April recommends concentrating on engaging family, friends and co-workers by sharing their personal story of why they may be involved with the walk event. Additionally, a large part of Team Blain’s success relies on the creative fundraising efforts they’ve spearheaded. Last year, they held a fundraiser at a local restaurant that featured a raffle and silent auction. Donations included high-ticket items like movie tickets, autographed sports memorabilia and a beach cruiser. Their fundraiser garnered more than $5,000 in donations that they credited to Team Blain.

“It was so exciting to have had such a positive response from the community,” April says. She adds that Team Blain is already looking to top their 2016 numbers and that they are excited to host their second annual fundraising event.

“We plan on raising more, recruiting more, and supporting SARRC and our Autism Speaks chapter the best we can,” April says. “Team Blain truly embodies the energy and soul of what it is to walk with the power of love!”

---

BY RANDI O’CONNOR

Team Blain Celebrates 2016 Walk Success

12th Annual Autism Speaks Walk in Partnership with SARRC
Sunday • October 29, 2017 9 a.m. to Noon

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:
- 5K & 1-Mile Family Fun Route
- Family Fun Festival & Kid Zone
- Autism Resource Providers
- Sprouts Vendor Village
- Food Truck caravan

Register at: autismspeakswalk.org

Thank you to our Walk Chair Matt McMahon and Presenting Sponsor Sprouts Farmers Market
Voices

I remember the first time I walked into SARRC. I was in the reception area, waiting with my leg bouncing up and down. I was nervously thinking about what my first volunteer session as a peer mentor in the CommunityWorks® program would be like. My only experience with autism was through stories my mom had told me about her time as a teacher in a self-contained classroom. I had images of a chair being thrown across the room or someone screaming. But I walked into a room full of games and instruments, and heard someone playing the piano. I walked over and began to play piano with the other person who was playing and we immediately connected. As the program started, I soon realized that the person I had been playing piano with had autism and that playing piano was the closest I would get to having a conversation with him for a while.

As the weeks went on and the activities continued, I began to meet more teens with autism. The diagnosis had little impact on our ability to find similarities, from movies to sports, we always found something to connect over. As I talked with more people the image of a chair flying across the room went further into the back of my mind. Now, in the front of my mind are my interactions with other teens.

I never thought about all the actions that make up a conversation: body language, eye contact, tone, spacing, questions, responses and how to end a conversation. As I practiced these skills with teens with autism, I had such an appreciation for how hard they were working to learn skills I never thought twice about. The teen I had played piano with was still reluctant to talk much at all, but slowly he would start to make eye contact that lasted longer and our conversations went from simple small talk to full-blown conversations about our favorite composers.

Together, we learned about different skills we needed for work, like how to send an absence email and signing in and out. A year later, I'm using these very skills in the workplace. As a peer mentor, I have also changed how I view conversations, which has improved my own interactions at work. In addition, this experience has opened me up to working with people with all different backgrounds. Through CommunityWorks, I learned autism isn't something to be feared and isn't something that takes over a person's personality. Through my interaction with individuals with autism, I've gained an appreciation for all the social skills I once took for granted, and notably, I've gained a new perspective on the world and the ability to see the world through others' eyes.

Mathilde Rispoli is a peer mentor in SARRC’s CommunityWorks® program at the Burton Barr Central Library.
SARCC’s clinical model is grounded in applied behavior analysis (ABA) with a particular focus on naturalistic behavioral interventions in inclusive environments (e.g. at home, in school, on the job, and in the community).

Each of SARCC’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 SARCC at 602.340.8717 or visit autismcenter.org.

Programs & Services

Diagnostic Services

SARCC’s Diagnostic Services offers comprehensive evaluation completed by a licensed psychologist to determine if an individual meets DSM-V diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Our evaluations are available to individuals of all ages and include parent/guardian/caregiver assessments to gather information about an individual’s developmental history. Diagnostic services are also available through the Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment (NOAD™), an accurate and effective diagnostic service that uses smartphone technology and a team of clinicians at SARCC to diagnose – or rule out – autism.

Family Orientation

Family Orientation connects caregivers of individuals with ASD to current information that will help them navigate the journey of autism. Participants learn about supports and services, evidence-based interventions, resources and SARCC programs specific to the individual’s stage of life. Family Orientation meetings are held once a month for caregivers of individuals in each age group: young child (younger than 6 years), school-age child (6 to 11 years), and teens and adults (12+ years). Meetings are designed for families of newly diagnosed children, those who have recently relocated to Arizona, and families making life transitions.

JumpStart® and JumpStart Online

JumpStart® is a six-week program that provides information, support and training to parents of children up to age 6 who have recently been diagnosed with or are at risk for ASD. Components of the program include staff-led discussions on the most critical topics for newly diagnosed families (e.g. characteristics of ASD, improving social communication, reducing problem behaviors, toilet training, Individualized Education Program (IEP), and accessing services), a classroom where children with ASD receive ABA-based intervention from highly trained SARCC therapists, and parent training in pivotal response treatment (PRT) to teach children to communicate. JumpStart is also available in Spanish. JumpStart Online is a hybrid program that combines a series of online lessons that families can access at their convenience with in-vivo coaching sessions with a SARCC therapist.

Milestones

The Milestones program offers services for first-time parents and parents of infants with older siblings with ASD. These services include monthly parenting classes that focus on developmental milestones and parenting practices to encourage play and interaction for all infants. Additional services are available for infants demonstrating early warning signs of autism including scheduled assessments, video monitoring and more intensive treatment options.

Comprehensive, Long-Term Intervention

Community School

The SARCC 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 with campuses in Phoenix and Tempe. All children (ages 18 months to 5 years) receive the benefits of highly trained SARCC classroom therapists within a 1:2 student-to-teacher ratio; a play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is aligned with state education standards; and a language-enriched environment structured to significantly improve meaningful engagement and social communication. Children with ASD also receive 21 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). After-school care is available for typically developing children.

Individualized Services Program

SARCC’s Individualized Services Program provides intensive, ABA-based programming across environments to meet the needs of individuals of all ages with ASD and their families. Treatment is primarily implemented in the home and in the community, and is often coordinated with a student’s school or adult’s employer’s vision. Families receive weekly 1:1 intervention sessions, a weekly caregiver training session, and program management and supervision from a BCBA. Goals are developed in collaboration with the family and focus on language skills, social skills, adaptive behavior, play/leisure skills, and cognitive development.

First Place Transition Academy

The First Place Transition Academy, operated by SARCC, is a two-year program that provides comprehensive and intensive ABA-based programming to transition young adults with ASD. Students live in apartments within the community while attending classes and working in internships. Students receive a comprehensive curriculum including career education and support, independent living skills, social and leisure skills, and transition services. The Transition Academy includes a 13-week semester, consisting of classes on finances, interpersonal relationships, advocacy and personal safety, culminating at the GateWay Community College campus. Instruction is also provided within the students’ apartments applying the skills they learn in the classroom to the natural environment. Students also participate in paid internship experiences leading to competitive employment by graduation.

Parent Training Program

SARCC’s Parent Training Program provides coaching and hands-on practice to equip parents with the tools needed to help teach their child appropriate language, social and play skills. Parents of children (0-8 years old) learn naturalistic, play-based teaching strategies proven to yield results. The program offers an intensive one-week model with daily coaching sessions as well as an extended 12-week program with weekly sessions at SARCC’s campus. Across all models, clinicians work toward specific goals identified through collaboration with parents.

CommunityWorks®

CommunityWorks® is an inclusive pre-employment and community involvement program that helps teens ages 13-18 make the transition to independent living, higher education and/or employment. Autism CommunityWorks includes LibraryWorks® and GoodDeedWorks® and provides the opportunities for individuals with ASD and peer mentors to engage in volunteer work throughout their communities while developing job and social communication skills. Teens with ASD may also receive parent training and 1:1 intervention sessions conducted in the family’s home and in the community.

Employment Services

Employment Services creates partnerships with local and national employers to increase competitive employment opportunities for adults, while teaching appropriate work behaviors, building social skills and providing specialized employment training. Clients begin with assessment to identify employment skills and interests; development of pre-vocational and vocational goals, supports and accommodations; resume and job interview preparation; and on-the-job training and coaching. Employment Services also provides vocational evaluations and support accessing vocational training programs in the community.

Beneficial Beans®

Beneficial Beans® internships provide work training opportunities for adults in the context of SARCC’s Social Enterprise businesses. The Beneficial Beans Café internship provides employment training in the areas of order fulfillment, distribution, sales, customer service, cash handling and barista skills. The Beneficial Beans garden internship engages individuals in every aspect of developing and sustaining a revenue-producing garden, including product development, marketing and sales, while building important workplace skills. Vegetables and herbs harvested from the Beneficial Beans Garden are sold to the community, in a true farm-to-table model.

Getting Started

Beneficial Beans®

Beneficial Beans® and JumpStart® are programs that are part of SARCC’s services and resources. For more information, visit autismcenter.org.

Outreach

Get Connected

46 | 2017

2017 | 47
Education and Training

Education, Training and Consultation

Education, Training and Consultation provides a range of services to meet the needs of parents, caregivers, professionals and educators. All services promote the use of evidence-based interventions and strategies for individuals with autism. SARRC specializes in naturalistic teaching strategies including Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT). Services are offered in a progressive level system to meet the varied needs of the community. We offer customized education opportunities to ensure broad reach and access with more in-depth training and consultation services for those looking to develop their own skills, including but not limited to School Consultation, Program Consultation, the FRIEND® Program (Fostering Relationships in Early Network Development) and ThinkAsperger’s.

Physician Outreach Program

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

Aviation

The Aviation study, sponsored by Roche Pharmaceuticals, is investigating the effects of vasopressin, a common blood-pressure medication, on social behavior and communication.

Autism Screening Network

For any developmental disorder, early diagnosis is key. SARRC has developed an Autism Screening Network network of more than 100 pediatricians that conduct screenings at well-baby check-ups. This program will essentially identify every child with ASD in the network by the age of 3 at the latest. Participating pediatricians agree to screen for ASD at the 12-, 18- and 24-month well-baby visits. If results indicate potential concerns, the parents are referred to SARRC for a free evaluation with a licensed clinical psychologist. Families are provided with feedback at the end of their visit and have a diagnostic report mailed to them within a few weeks.

PEERS® Program Study

The Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) is a 14-week, evidence-based social skills intervention for adolescents with ASD without a cognitive disability and their parents. PEERS focuses on helping teens learn ways to make and keep friends. Each group session centers around important social skills and opportunities to practice these skills during fun and interactive activities. Parents are an important piece of the program, and are taught feedback strategies to assist their teens in starting and maintaining friendships. SARRC is performing a study of PEERS® and its long-term effects on socialization, particularly the generalization of behaviors learned within the program.

JAKE (Jansen Autism Knowledge Engine)

This observational study assessed the usability of JAKE as a system to monitor clinical outcomes in ASD. The project investigated the application of new outcome measures in pharmaceutical trials. Instead of traditional interviews and questionnaires to document progress, JAKE included measures from eye tracking and brain activity to document changes. While this study has recently come to an end, a new study using this technology will open for recruitment in the later part of 2017.

Curemark Study

The Curemark study is a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial of a proprietary digestive enzyme, focused on the safety, efficacy and treatment of the core symptoms associated with ASD. Participants in this trial must be between 5 and 12 years old and have ASD. Upon completion of the double-blind trial, participants will have the option of enrolling in an open-label phase of the trial.
SNAPSHOT

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2016 *(unaudited)

**Assets**
- Current Assets: $6,168,794
- Long Term Assets: $7,606,163
- **TOTAL ASSETS**: $13,774,957

**Liabilities**
- Current Liabilities: $981,596
- Long Term Liabilities: $85,044
- **TOTAL LIABILITIES**: $1,066,640

**Net Assets**
- Unrestricted Net Assets: $5,039,976
- Temporarily Restricted Net Assets: $5,038,341
- Permanently Restricted Net Assets: $2,630,000
- **TOTAL NET ASSETS**: $12,708,317

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**
for the Period Ending December 31, 2016 *(unaudited)*

**Support & Revenue**
- Individuals & Corporations: $613,780
- Grants: $622,747
- Governmental: $248,508
- Special Events: $1,505,973
- Program Fees: $6,086,144
- Interest, Dividends & Investments: $381,152
- In-Kind Support: $364,019
- **TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE**: $9,822,323

**Expenses**
- Salaries, Benefits & Professional Development: $7,186,272
- Contract Labor & Professional Services: $517,730
- Program Expenses: $685,007
- Postage, Printing & Marketing: $236,554
- Occupancy & Communication: $307,218
- Special Events Costs: $175,973
- In-Kind Expenses: $182,895
- Amortization & Depreciation: $420,907
- **TOTAL EXPENSES**: $9,712,554

**TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS**: $109,769

**Financials**

Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center

**GRANDPARENTS SUPPORT GROUP**

SARRC’s Grandparents Support Group is the visionary creation of Kathy Bosco, who has a grandson impacted by autism.

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

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

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

For more information, visit www.autismcenter.org or contact Kathy Bosco at 602.340.8717
Planned gifts provide a future of hope and a legacy of love.

SARRC's Legacy Circle is a special way to recognize the support of those who help ensure the future success of our programs and services.

autismcenter.planmylegacy.org