



*A Year of* Discovery



***Pace School***

2003-04 Annual Report





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## Mission

Pace School is an approved private, non-profit day school. Our mission is to educate children with behavioral, emotional, and/or neurological challenges, ages 5-15, and to serve their families and school districts. Based on the individualized need, Pace provides each student with a unique and enriching environment. This is achieved by multifaceted programming encompassing academic instruction, educational support, and mental health services. *Ultimately, our goal is to facilitate an improved quality of life for each student.*

## Advisory Committee 2003-2004

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Discovery:  
*Look Beyond the Obvious*



Dr. Linda Miller  
*Executive Director*

As I walked up to the front entrance, I looked quizzically at the sign in front of the school. It read, “P e ch.” Normally it says, “Pace School.”

I learned that, earlier, a student named Joe had torn down six of the cast iron letters bolted to the brick wall in a burst of anger. To all appearances, this was his adolescent reaction to a classroom problem he was facing.

As it turns out, Joe was actually struggling with the possibility that he was about to be relocated from his home to a residential youth facility because of ongoing family and community problems. The fact that he took out his anguish on a brick wall made some sense given that information. Joe’s security was threatened and the prospect of uncertain and unfamiliar circumstances at his young age frightened him. At the moment, this was the only way he could express his anger and fears.

Every student at Pace School has a life story that asks us to look beyond the obvious. And it is through this process of discovery that we are enabled to learn and benefit. In this *2003-04 Annual Report*, we are pleased to share some of our discoveries and the difference it made to the kids and families in our program.

# *The Children and Youth We Serve*

**The boys and girls enrolled at Pace School are six to 14 years old and have one thing in common. Each needs special education and mental health services beyond those typically available in school districts. This is the common criteria for referral. In the 2003-04 school year:**

**88%** *of students meet federal income guidelines for the free and reduced lunch program*

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**100%** *qualified in a category of special education: emotional disturbance, neurological impairment or autism*

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**100%** *were referred because they exhausted school district services*

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*On average, students were three to four years below grade level in reading and math*

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**100%** *had one or more mental health diagnoses as indicated below (diagnoses included ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder, mood disorder, anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, psychosis, adjustment disorder)*

- *5%, one diagnosis*
- *44%, two diagnoses*
- *30%, three diagnoses*
- *22%, four diagnoses*



Discovery:

## *Change Requires a Trusting Environment*

The students of Pace School do not enter the program realizing that they need a safe place for change. Typically, it is the last thing on their minds. Gary is a good example. He entered Pace with a history of school and community problems and few academic achievements. At the age of 10, he was accustomed to disruption and chaos and time spent away from learning. For another student, Niki, the outcome was the same. She was clingy and sad; a history of trauma made it difficult for her to concentrate.

The challenge for Pace School is to participate in the personal dramas of Gary and Niki enough to understand their storylines and the expected outcomes, and to then change the direction of events and redirect the traumatic scenarios so that new,

healthier experiences are possible. This year, a staff-led initiative helped us to better focus this therapeutic mission and dedicate ourselves to creation of an environment different than found at Pace School before. Above all, we realize that children like Gary and Niki need adults who can extend the roles that good parents play and a system that provides the safety and security for relationships to be sustained and change to be risked.

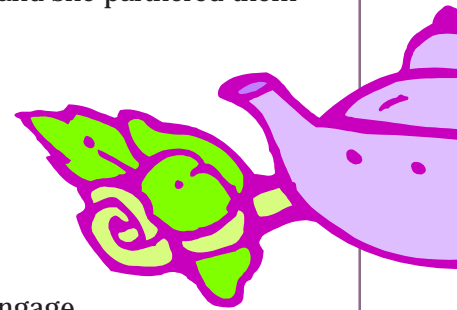
*Children need adults  
who can extend the roles  
that good parents play.*

# *Academic and mental Pace students require on everyo*

Nine-year old Brittany came to Pace School because her anger had become a source of unsafe conditions in her public school. Our therapists learned that one reason for her anger was significant stress that arose from severe family conflict. At enrollment, Anna was the other girl in her classroom. Anna, like Brittany, was “bossy,” competitive and independent.

One of Brittany’s goals in her written Individualized Education Program was to learn anger management skills. She had the ability to be a capable learner; it was important that she learn strategies to handle her stress and thereby maximize her opportunities for achievement.

Through assessment, the teacher learned that Brittany and Anna were alike in their academic skills and she partnered them in tasks that drew upon their competitiveness and mutual interests. It was a good way to build a friendship and also engage both girls in reading and math. At the same time, in daily Community Meeting the behavior specialist focused on friendship and on the skills it takes to get along with others and solve problems when they arise. Review of the day’s events and practice helped Brittany and all her classmates evaluate their progress.



covery:

## *al health growth for s above average effort one's part*

Importantly, the mental health therapist worked with the family in the home and contact was maintained daily through

a home note to create more connection between the family and school.

Yet another special ingredient was added to the mix--a special tea party for Brittany and

Anna. Per a plan, every time the girls demonstrated efforts to work together and work out differences, they received a sticker. When their goal was met, Brittany and Anna invited favorite guests to a festive occasion complete with lace tablecloth, old fashioned china cups,

special treats and lovely music. It was the joint achievement that had these two friends beaming.

Nathan Leeman, Technology Coordinator at Pace says, “our ongoing work to close the achievement gap between our students and typically performing peers helps us see that we have to individualize instruction and intervention well beyond each student’s written plan.” As Brittany’s experience emphasizes, getting the most from our model of combined education and mental health services is the key for every child we serve.



Discovery:

## *Friends Make the Difference*



Dwight White, Honorary Chair

One reason for the introduction of the *Race for Pace* in 2000 was to create awareness of services like those provided by Pace School. Three years later the 2003 event helped us discover the power of friends. First was Mr. Dwight White, famed member of the Pittsburgh Steelers and four-time Super Bowl champion. Serving as Honorary Chair, Dwight White helped us bring attention to this important friend/fund raising event in unprecedented ways.



The Long Family Team



The Pittsburgh Project Windbreakers

Another very important addition was team competitions. Altogether nine teams organized to run or walk the 5K distance, inclusive of a 54-member team from Pace School. Donations and participation increased as a result!



Federated Investors



Mahoney Madness



University of Pittsburgh Semester at Sea

Importantly, funds raised from the 2003 *Race for Pace* helped to support one or more of the following: implementation of a monthly parenting skills/family support program, introduction of the specialized therapeutic support group for adolescent girls, development of an additional classroom dedicated to the unique needs of fourth through sixth graders with autism, and expansion of our therapeutic summer program.

*Race for Pace supports  
new ways of bringing  
everyone on board*



***Girls' Group*** was introduced as one way to affect the achievement of adolescent females in our program. Typically girls comprise 10% to 15% of the population. In the context of this therapeutic experience, the girls had a voice to address conflicts in more structured and socially appropriate ways, gain positive leadership opportunities and take pride in managing the daily events of their lives. Another plus is that the girls were more available for structured learning in the classroom.

***Parent Group/Family Nights*** provided a valuable way for new families to quickly learn about the program. Introduced in the 2003-04 school year, these once a month evening gatherings provided a chance for caregivers to speak honestly about their challenges. Words of advice from a variety of sources drew 10 to 30 families on any given occasion. A tasty dinner with the family and opportunities for the babies, children and youth to participate in activities were other benefits to be enjoyed!



# Staff



*Our team of dedicated staff members include Core Curriculum Classroom Teachers, Classroom Assistants, Mobile Support, Special Area Teachers, Special Services Staff, Mental Health Therapists, Milieu Therapists, Psychiatrists and Support Staff.*

## **Executive Director**

Linda Miller, Ph.D.

## **Chief Financial Officer and Director of Business Operations**

James Mele, PRSBA

## **Director of Education**

Karen Shepherd, M.Ed.

## **Clinical Director**

Wendy McSparren, LCSW

## **Medical Director**

Gary Vallano, M.D.

## **Lower School Supervisors**

Jeanne Baird, M.Ed. - *Education*

Ralph (Mick) Fiore, M.Ed. - *Clinical*

## **Upper School Supervisors**

Jodi Dunlap, M.Ed. - *Education*

Landa C. Harrison, M.Ed., LPC - *Clinical*

## **Special Area/Special Events Supervisor**

Wendy Meadows, M.Ed.

# Financial Report

## Operating Fund

*Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004*

<u>Revenues</u>	<u>FY 2003/04</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>% Inc/(Dec) from Prior Year</u>
Program Revenues	\$ 5,318,653	98.2%	5.8%
Contributions	87,626	1.6%	(61.2%) *
Other Revenues	10,855	0.2%	40.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,417,134</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
 <u>Expenses</u>			
Personnel Costs	4,369,065	80.6%	4.6%
Other Program Costs	292,663	5.4%	(0.6%)
Supporting Services & Facility Costs	744,980	13.7%	6.6%
Other Expenses	11,737	0.2%	27.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,418,445</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>

*\* Decrease reflects the fulfillment of gifts to the Capital Campaign in 2002-2003.*

*This statement summarizes audited financial statements. A more detailed report is available from the Executive Director's Office, Pace School, 2432 Greensburg Pike, Pittsburgh, PA 15221, phone 412-244-1900.*

Discovery:

# Community Support Grows with Increasing Awareness

*Pace gratefully acknowledges the kindness and generosity of our valued donors, in-kind contributors and volunteers who supported our program during the 2003-2004 fiscal year.*

## *FOUNDATIONS*

A.L. Spenser Foundation  
Bertha K. Blum Fund of  
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Community Involvement  
Foundation  
Dominion Foundation  
ING Foundation  
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Massey Charitable Trust

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## *IN-KIND GIFTS & SERVICES*

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D'Imperio's Restaurant  
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Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera  
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Pittsburgh Penguins  
Pittsburgh Pirates  
Pittsburgh Playhouse

Pittsburgh Public Theatre  
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 Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium  
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 Pleasant Present  
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 by Ruth & Jim Bachman*

*In Memory of  
 Marshall S. Levy  
 by Lois G. Levy*

*In Memory of Michael Rettger  
 by Bob & Linda Nelson*

*In Memory of Jack Beard  
 by Bill & Gayle Simpson*

The above listings reflect gifts  
 and services received between  
 7/1/02 and 6/30/03.

Pace School strives to  
 accurately acknowledge our  
 valued supporters and we  
 welcome feedback that allows  
 us an opportunity to correct  
 inadvertent mistakes.

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