



Keeping Pace

Spring 2004 Edition

A Publication of Pace School, a private, non-profit day school for children with special needs
Pace is a member of the Alliance of Approved Private Schools.

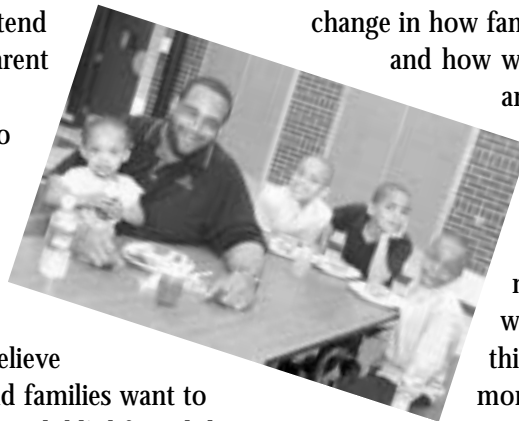
Reaching Out to Parents and Families



Parent Group and Family Night was introduced at Pace School this year. These gatherings occur one evening each month. Wendy McSparren, Clinical Director, was instrumental in the initiation of this important activity and below she speaks to the value of this experience.

“When I arrived at Pace, I saw a great need for increased involvement of parents and families so we could have a greater impact and a deeper level of success with the children who attend the program. Parent Group/Family Night seemed to be a good way to best use the resources of Pace School to reach out to our families. I believe most parents and families want to participate in their child’s life and they appreciate support and resources to help them and their child be successful. On the second Monday of each month we provide creative programming for the parents, siblings and extended family members, a meal; and in some cases, child care and transportation. Most importantly, we have created a welcoming place for parents to socialize as well as to obtain information and support from our clinical staff and from each other. It’s very gratifying to see families and kids

working together, and with us, for the sake of their child’s success. We also have the beginnings of a shift in how Pace thinks about and works with kids and families, and the beginnings of change in how families view the school and how we work with them and their children. We’re excited about building on this momentum and increasing the number of families who regularly join in this effort. After all, the more we become partners, the more we can accomplish—and that’s the goal we all want to achieve.”



...a parent’s perspective

Family night has been a night that I don’t have to worry about dinner and can focus on spending time with my son and learning about him. The educational speakers have taught me about medications, reasons for behaviors and interventions to try, understanding trust issues, and ways to instill a better love for reading in my children. My son has had opportunities to interact with other students and their siblings where he has learned about valuable life lessons and about how his behaviors impact others through the well planned group activities provided for the children. For all this to take place AFTER school hours shows the terrific dedication of the staff and their desire to make family nights a successful experience for all involved.”

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A Leadership Message . . .



“It is hard to believe that we have been in our current facility for four years. So much has been learned in that time and so much has happened for the good of our children and families. The new building gave us the space we needed to program more effectively and strategically for kids. After the first year we added a therapeutic summer program and two years ago we introduced more focused service for our children with autism and Asperger’s Syndrome. Services for these unique children continue to grow. We now hold the 5K *Race for Pace* which brings visibility to the services offered by Pace to a broader audience. Our clinical staff is actively engaging our most important partners—the parents and families. And we are ever vigilant about meeting the expectations of No Child Left Behind and “closing the gap.”

The Board of Directors and I sincerely thank you for your support across the years and the outcomes it has meant for children. We are most proud of the decrease in time it takes students, on average, to transition from Pace to a regular education setting. It is a very important indicator that our integration of mental health and educational service is effective.

Much has happened in four years and the future promises to be just as exciting!”

Sincerely,

Joel R. Bernard
Chairperson, Board of Directors

David Nicholson

David Nicholson is President of Leed’s based in New Kensington. He lives in Squirrel Hill with his wife and children. Previously, David served on the board of the Pittsburgh Council for Public Education and is a graduate of the Leadership Development Initiative.

“ I was interested in joining the Pace Board for two reasons. First, I believe Pace plays an important role in our

educational system—serving students that are often overlooked and underserved. I have been involved with other education-related groups and feel that public education must remain a priority for our region. The second reason was my personal connection with a number of current board members who spoke very highly of Pace. The Board and the entire Pace organization share a passion for its mission that I find exciting.”

New Faces on the Board of Directors

Cain A. Hayes

Cain A. Hayes, CEBS, MBA, is employed with the Principal Financial Group as the Vice President of Sales for the Retirement Services Division. At age 31, he became the youngest person to be promoted to that position. Cain is an Eagle Scout who has served on the Board of Directors for the Boy Scouts of America in Pittsburgh and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Orlando. He expresses his strong volunteer spirit in other service roles that bring recognition to him, his wife and two children. Cain is a life

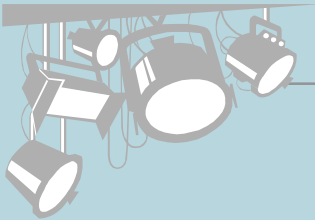
member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. About his reason for service on the Pace Board of Directors, he says:

“ The mission of PACE is one that I have a strong conviction for. I come from a long line of educators and realize the tremendous importance of education for all kids regardless of their circumstances.”

Volunteer Corner

Coffee-drinking leads to helpful resources

*Bonnie Miller, Business Office Assistant at Pace, is “fueled” to do her job by Starbucks Coffee. And in return, Starbucks is a fan of Bonnie’s. Thanks to this relationship, Kendra Bryant at the Penn Center Monroeville store, chose Pace School for two “Make Your Mark” campaigns. In these campaigns the Starbucks’ store manager selects an organization, organizes their employees to volunteer time at one or more events for the organization, and then converts the hours each employee works to a cash donation. Pace was the fortunate recipient of volunteer help at its annual Holiday Bazaar and looks forward to helping hands at the *Race for Pace* on October 9, 2004. We applaud Starbucks and Kendra for their community interest and gratefully thank them for sending valuable resources our way!*

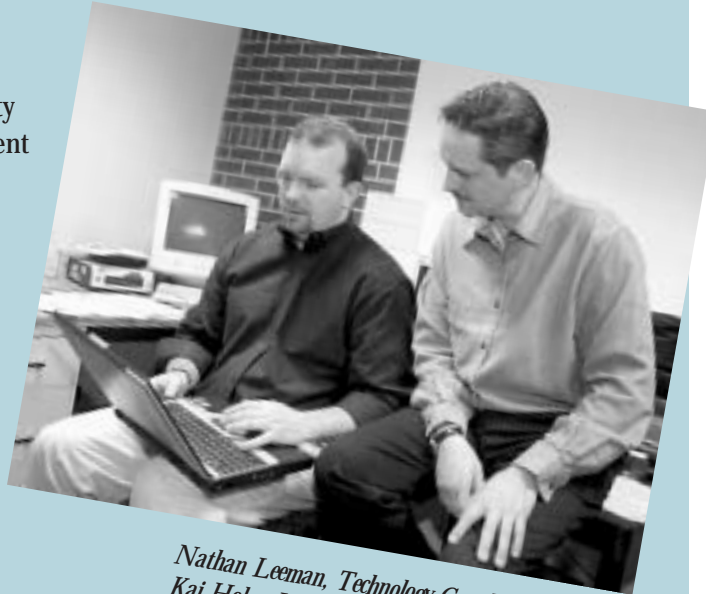


In the Spotlight

Pace welcomed the opportunity in 2003 for a technology assessment from the Bayer Center for Non-Profit Management, Robert Morris University.

As summarized by Ms. Sallie Wormer, Technology Services Analyst, "in many ways, the Pace School is a model nonprofit for integrating technology into its operations. Technology staff (pictured right) have a clear understanding of organizational priorities and needs as well as the ear of leadership and an atmosphere that is conducive to meaningful dialogue and sound technology decision making. Credit is due these technical staff who have taken the initiative to make sure that technical directions sustain and enhance the School's mission and goals."

According to Ms. Wormer, the work culture of the Pace School organization shows that the organi-



Nathan Leeman, Technology Coordinator and Kai Hoke, Information Management Specialist

zation views technology as a strategic advantage. Experts find that only 5 percent of nonprofits demonstrate this kind of culture.

The report also provides useful suggestions for improvement and can be found in full at www.paceschool.org.

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According to *Carol Burgman, music teacher* at Pace School, the McKeesport Symphony is a Mon Valley treasure. This professional orchestra performs throughout the season providing the residents of Allegheny County with a hometown presentation of world class music.

It is apparent that the Symphony also thinks Carol is a gem. She is their recipient of the 2004 Stolarevsky Award for service in the arts in the choral/vocal/opera category.

As a child growing up in the McKeesport area, Carol had the honor of singing in a children's chorus for one memorable concert. Years later she found herself working with the organization as a fundraiser and luncheon lecturer for the

symphony's auxilliary. She founded and directed the Children's Chorus, sang with the adult chorus, and assisted in many other ways. She also performed with the symphony several times as a soprano soloist.

We congratulate Carol on her award and commend the McKeesport Symphony for their outstanding selection!



S tudents challenge each other to learn

It is a personal mission for Jodi Dunlap, Education Supervisor in the Upper School, to challenge students academically. Understanding the power of group effort and the satisfaction of collective achievement, Mrs. Dunlap launched the Academic Council in January 2004. She says, "I have had an extremely positive response from students and staff since beginning the Academic Council program and the weekly math and writing challenges. Students have begun to actively work toward making Honor Roll. Daily, students tell me how they are working on the math



"Academic Council helps me focus on being more mature."

problem or want to discuss their writing projects. The students have accepted the challenges presented to them and done better than I could have hoped!"

Academic Council is a committee of almost 30 Upper School students that meets twice a month to discuss possible solutions to schoolwide problems.

They generate ideas about academics and social skills to help students achieve their potential. Students are only eligible for this council if they make Honor Roll and they must sign a contract to complete homework and work in class; demonstrate appropriate behaviors in the school and on the bus; set good examples for other students in words and actions and help to create sanctuary at Pace School.

In February, members of the Academic Council were challenged to increase their individual times in reading and math practice via a schoolwide self-paced software program. In one month, 17 students collectively increased their time by 54 hours. The next challenge was for these council members to increase practice time for their entire classroom. Data tells students whether or not they are succeeding.

Says William, a council member, "I think Academic Council is for people who want to make a difference in this school. I have been doing more work and trying to be on my best behavior. Academic Council helps me focus on being more mature."



Race for Pace
5K Run/Walk

Please Join Us!
October 9, 2004

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