

A publication of Pace School, a private, non-profit day school dedicated to providing educational and therapeutic services that enable any child to thrive.

fulfilling a need

Expansion to Ninth Grade to begin Fall 2006

Pace School proudly announces that it will begin secondary programming in the 2006-2007 school year. Operationally, this means the addition of a ninth grade to the current K – 8 program.

There are many reasons for this expansion but most important is fulfilling a need expressed by families and school districts.

As it stands, students “age out” of Pace School at eighth grade and about a third return to public schools. Two-thirds, however, continue to need intense mental health support to continue their

march towards graduation. Considering the relationships that have been established between families and Pace therapists and educators, it makes sense to build upon that base to support these youngsters into their high school years.

In the recently approved strategic plan by the Pace School Board of Directors, addition of a ninth grade is a first step towards expanding Pace’s ability to serve families and school districts in our community. Many voices both locally and statewide had input to the plan, and under the leadership of Board Chair, Mr. David Mosey, it is the roadmap for exciting change.

“I am excited that Pace’s ninth grade is a step towards graduation for my child.”

— Pace School Parent



Learning takes many forms at Pace School, and “caving” under the direction of skilled therapists is one way that students face and overcome challenges.

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a leadership message from David Mosey

"It makes sense that Pace School's Strategic Plan is centered on the core values of serving more kids, serving them in new ways, and serving all kids better."

In Pace's strategic planning process, most valuable to me as Board Chair was the environmental scan we conducted with the Bayer Center for Non-Profit Management at Robert Morris University. Talks with leaders across a broad spectrum of the community strongly conveyed that new expectations are emerging.

One expectation held by leaders in the Pennsylvania Department of Education and in public schools is that Pace's hard-to-teach / hard-to-reach students should be held to the same outcomes as any other public school child. While they recognize the challenges this implies, there is remarkable conviction that closing the skills gap could and should be done. It was also conveyed that they want our assistance to identify innovative

and different ways to help make such progress possible. Accountability is at the heart of these expectations and makes sense within the current climate of *No Child Left Behind* and the pressure on schools to meet performance standards.

In the absence of a roadmap or an innovative funding apparatus, I am thankful that the leadership of Pace School sees these emerging attitudes as opportunities for sharing expertise.

It is logical that Pace School's strategic plan is centered on the core values of serving more kids, serving them in new ways, and serving all kids better. And it is a plan that outlines what success for Pace will look like over the coming decades.

certifying Pace as a

Trauma Sensitive Environment

In September 2005, Pace School leaders took part in the inaugural Sanctuary Leadership Training, co-developed by psychiatrist, Dr. Sandy Bloom, and the Andrus Children's Center of Yonkers, New York.

Dr. Bloom is a long-time friend of Pace and has been a consultant since 2001. She is renowned internationally for her work with children and adults traumatized by exposure to abusive power, disabling losses or disrupted attachment.

Five agencies, inclusive of four U.S. and one international program, participated in the leadership training. Over a three-year period, certification as a Sanctuary program is the goal of Pace School.



"A traumatic experience impacts the entire person—the way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about other people, and the way we make sense of the world..."

— Sandy L. Bloom

Creating Sanctuary is the actual process of providing a safe and healing environment for children who need to recover from the effects of trauma, and for less traumatized children as well.

According to Dr. Bloom, "Creating Sanctuary is not for the faint-hearted. Creating and maintaining democratic, therapeutic, health promoting and sustaining environments is difficult, demanding, and frustrating just as it is exciting, challenging and fulfilling."

A growing body of research tells us that unresolved childhood trauma influences health and well being throughout the lifespan, and that is the real outcome that Pace School hopes to impact through this important organizational initiative.

in the spotlight

Executive Director named Stanford Fellow

In 2006, Dr. Linda Miller, Executive Director, was selected for a Fellowship from the Stanford Graduate School of Business, the Center for Social Innovation (CSI). As a CSI Fellow, Dr. Miller received a \$6,000 scholarship toward tuition for the Executive Program for Non-Profit Leaders (EPNL).

Miller and Mr. Court Gould, Director of "Sustainable Pittsburgh," were two regional non-profit leaders selected by the Forbes Fund to participate in EPNL. The mission of the Forbes Fund is to help non-profit organizations improve their management and policymaking capabilities. They underwrote the remaining tuition for Miller and Gould.

The 2006 EPNL program included 53 non-profit leaders from 13 countries. Drawing on the leading-edge research and course offerings of the Stanford faculty, the



program skillfully blends conceptual knowledge with Fellows' own experience to generate powerful and practical insights about leadership and management.

Says Miller, *"the opportunity to exchange ideas with such talented and diverse faculty and non-profit leaders helped me better evaluate a wealth of management ideas and concepts and shape my personal plan of action for Pace School."*

sharing our expertise

Shepherd and Leeman "AimsWeb" trainers in Pennsylvania



Accountability is the watchword in schools today. You can ask any educator; the expectation grows for at-risk students, and students in special education programs to close their achievement gaps in the core areas of reading, math,

and written expression. If sufficient progress is not achieved, teacher intervention is expected.

The preferred method for monitoring student progress is "Curriculum-Based Measurement" (CBM). Under the direction of Karen Shepherd, Director of Education, and Nathan Leeman, Coordinator of Technology and Assessment, this highly researched methodology is a staple of Pace School.

CBM assessment probes are quick to administer, simple to score and they can be given frequently to provide continuous progress data. At Pace School, students in all grades are tested weekly in reading and

monthly in math and written expression. Based on feedback, the teacher decides whether intervention is needed as well as the approach to take.

Twenty thousand teachers in the United States use CBM tests to track results with AIMSweb®. This web-based software system combines Curriculum-Based Measurement with web-based data management and reporting applications. Together, these components provide a proactive, evidence-based solution for screening, strategic assessment, and progress monitoring. At Pace School, AimsWeb technology permits Shepherd and others to set individual, classroom and school wide achievement goals—and to continuously track progress.

In total, 27 states now have Certified AimsWeb Trainers, including Shepherd and Leeman in Pennsylvania. By drawing on their Pace School experience, these two train public school educators how best to use the technology, and ultimately, how to improve outcomes for students across the Commonwealth.

We invite you to gain more information about AimsWeb and their certified trainers, including Karen Shepherd and Nathan Leeman, at www.aimsweb.com or www.paceschool.org.



New Board members provide valuable perspectives and skills

a public school voice

Mrs. Cheryl Levin joined the Board of Directors in May 2005. She has been an elementary school principal in the Plum Borough School District for nine years. Her husband is a psychologist in private practice. She has a 22-year old daughter presently teaching in the New York City Schools with the "Teach For America" program. Another daughter is completing her junior year at Allderdice High School.

Says Mrs. Levin, "I have been directly and indirectly involved in special education over the past 25 years. I now welcome the opportunity to share my perspective with those of other Board members that we may positively impact the Pace organization and its students."



healthcare knowledge

Mr. David Wolf began Board service in May 2005. He is the managing partner of Tri Pointe Benefits, a local employee benefits and wellness consulting organization. His joy is twin daughters, healthy five-year olds who were born 2½ months premature.

About service on the Pace Board, Mr. Wolf remarks, "I have known Jim Mele, the CFO, and Pace School for about 15 years and have always thought highly of the organization and the mission they serve.

When my girls were born, I was exposed to a whole new world of organizations and people that are dedicated to making life better for kids...special needs or not. Pace School not only provides me a great mechanism to give back for everything my daughters received but also allows me an opportunity to help children with special needs thrive in life by having the best possible education available.

Volunteer Heroes

Pace School is indebted to newly installed Emeritus Board members, *Mr. Sandy Gold* and *Mrs. Patsy Bluestone*. Between them, these community heroes have more than 50 years of service to the children and families served by Pace.

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Your tax deductible gift to Pace School is a powerful investment in a brighter future for us all!

More information about charitable giving is available at www.paceschool.org or by calling Marilan Caito at 412-244-1900, ext. 4202

cut along dotted line



"Can I play that Beethoven thing?"

School districts across the nation are narrowing their focus to reading, writing and math - high stakes testing areas. This is not the case at Pace School although Education Supervisor, Jodi Dunlap, comments,

"We are struggling everyday to close the gap in achievement and fit in enough academic time."

The question is, can we really afford such limitations? Carol Burgman, music teacher at Pace School, says no, and explains why.

"Alex is a 13-year old in my class. He has a hard exterior and has good reason for it. But, Alex respects Beethoven. He relates to the musician's physical and artistic suffering, his unrequited love and

tortured youth, and the beauty of his exquisite melodies. Alex asked me to teach him to play the opening phrases of *Fur Elise* after seeing a video of Beethoven's amazing life story. *One year later, he continues to play the melody. Alex holds the "deaf dude" in very high esteem, for, if he created beauty despite seemingly insurmountable odds, there is hope.*"

The mother of a Pace child with Autism tells it another way. *"Without his art he would never have learned how to express himself with pictures, without gym class he wouldn't be able to have confidence that he can do anything or have learned what a TEAM is."*

"The 'answer,' if there is one," says Dunlap, "is to incorporate the academic standards of reading, written communication and math into other subjects." Joanne Starolis, Daily Living Skills teacher, agrees and adds, "Our students need successful opportunities to reinforce their limited reading/math skills and what better way to do this but in a foods lab or a sewing class here at Pace School, or any school for that matter. *Not only am I teaching life skills needed to make it in our society but I am teaching important thinking skills that are needed for a lifetime of survival as an independent individual in our community!"*

Race for Pace

UPS joins Pace team!



UPS rejoins a winning **Race for Pace** team to promote mental wellness for children. During a visit to Pace School, Mr. Bill Caplan, Vice President of the Laurel Mountain District, presented a \$5,000 check to honorary race chairs Dwight White, former Steeler great and Karen Farmer White, Vice President of Education at WQED Multimedia.

Joining UPS as major sponsors for this year's **Race for Pace** are Dominion Foundation, PNC, Leed's World and A. Martini & Company.

Save the Date - October 14, 2006

Mailing List Update

Please help us keep our mailing list up to date by informing us of any changes.

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what's new?

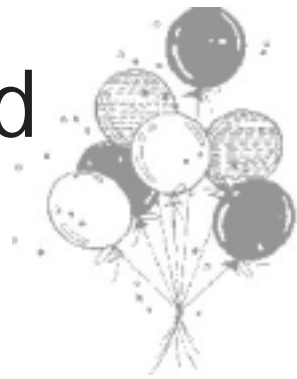
New Website Launched

www.paceschool.org

An updated website has been launched to “keep pace” with the wealth of information Pace School has to share. It has a new look, a new feel and a new functionality.

The site was redesigned to provide families, school districts, the community, and the world with better access to information about Pace School’s programs and services for children with autism spectrum disorders, emotional disturbances and/or pervasive developmental delays. The most notable changes are the depth of information available and the improved navigation capabilities that enable users to quickly find what they need.

“Through the new and improved www.paceschool.org website, the community will benefit from the user-friendly format in many



Where
Kids
Grow

ways,” says Linda Miller, Executive Director of Pace School.

“Parents and school districts can learn more how our program can help their child overcome his or her challenges. Special education and mental health professionals can explore career opportunities. Prospective donors and volunteers can discover ways to invest in the future growth and development of our resilient kids—and fitness enthusiasts can find information about the annual October **Race for Pace** 5K Run/Walk!”

Click on www.paceschool.org and let us know what you think!



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