Parents Make the Difference

By: Karen Taycher

Over twenty years ago, the mother of a young elementary school student with disabilities wanted her son to have the same experiences that all of the neighborhood boys did here in Las Vegas. She wanted her son to play baseball, so naturally she signed him up for Little League. The first few games were a challenge; he tried so hard but it just didn’t feel right. Patricia Borst contacted Robert Fleming the Little League administrator and shared her hopes and dreams for her son to be able to experience baseball. The Administrator had just returned from a national meeting where they had highlighted the Challenger Division of Little League Baseball. The two of them began making calls to see what kind of support they could drum up to start a league of Challenger here in Southern Nevada.

I was one of those parents who received a call and I was very excited about the idea. I had a son around the same age and wanted him to have the great experience of a team sport; I knew that this was going to be something that our whole family wanted to get involved with. My husband loved the idea so much, he wanted to be one of the first coaches. He signed up right away and has been involved ever since.

Now, more than 20 years later, my husband is still working to keep smiles on the faces of the boys and girls with disabilities as Director of the Challenger Little League of Southern Nevada. Early in 1991, Challenger got off the ground with four teams and 40 players. Today, they have grown to an astounding 12 teams and 140 players in the program.

For his many years of volunteer work with the program, Mr. Taycher was selected as the recipient of International Little League’s 2011 Challenger Award. Thomas Taycher was recognized in August of 2011 during the Little League Baseball 65th World Series in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania at a honorarium breakfast, an on-field ceremony and he was able to throw out the first pitch at the Challenger Division Exhibition Game. Thomas accepted the award on behalf of all of the volunteer parents, task force members, and the players that have been part of this remarkable twenty year history.

Our son, who was once a player, now coaches and serves on the Challenger Task force. We have made wonderful friendships over the years; it is the best way to spend a Saturday morning.

I share the story because I want parents to know that they make a difference. Each time parents work to enhance their children’s lives, parents are improving the quality of life and opportunities for others.

Piero's Italian Cuisine Restaurant
The Restaurant with a BIG Heart!!!

By: Stephanie Vrsnik

Nevada PEP would like to thank Piero's Italian Cuisine for opening their doors to help Nevada PEP families with their Annual Turkey Gobble. For the 7th year in a row, Piero's served a delicious traditional Thanksgiving dinner to over 170 Nevada PEP family members free of charge. This year has been especially difficult for many of our families, and families are very grateful to be able to enjoy a beautiful family dinner in a very friendly family restaurant. Nevada PEP is privileged to partner with Piero's on this day of celebrating families being together.

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Does Your Child Have Challenging Behaviors?
By: Cheri Day

There are many options open to parents who have children with challenging behaviors. An option that many parents have found helpful is Positive Behavioral Interventions. With this option, parents can consider which behavior is causing the most challenge and replace it with a behavior that is more appropriate.

It is suggested to work on one behavior at a time using positive feedback. Good results happen when all family members and the school use the same approach. Children should be given many opportunities to practice the appropriate behavior and receive positive feedback frequently. It does take time to change challenging behaviors, but with practice and patience, parents and their children can be successful.

Nevada PEP offers Positive Behavior Intervention training throughout the year. Please contact our office at: Las Vegas 702-388-8899 or Reno 775-448-9950 Toll-free 1-800-216-5188 pepinfo@nvpep.org

Assistive Technology for All
By: Havander Davis

Hello Nevada PEP friends and families. I recently attended the Assistive Technology for Employment Summit, and I’d love to tell you about what I did there! As a visually impaired person, I love assistive technology, and I get very excited when I think I am about to see some new items, but I was surprised to find out that the AT summit was not about new technology at all. It was about something equally as important as the technology itself.

People from all across this wonderful state traveled to Las Vegas for a two day discussion about how to get assistive technology into the hands of every person with a disability in Nevada regardless of cost or age. During the first day of the summit, we broke into groups to brainstorm ideas. At the end of the first day, we reviewed the ideas, arranged them by topic, and created subcommittees that would take hold of the ideas and come up with plans to make the ideas come to life. The next day, we were asked to join the committee that we thought we could be the most helpful on.

I joined the Interagency Collaboration and Community Partnering committee. We were charged with finding ways to bring agencies together and close the gaps so that clients stop falling through the cracks. We envision agencies coming together and helping to provide assistive technology to those that need it starting the day they are born. I am proud to be able to help in the process and can’t wait until our next meeting. There are several other committees too, and all working together to make assistive technology accessible for all persons who have a need for it.

The focus of the Assistive Technology summit was not to show new technology, but to find a way to bring agencies together and make a better Nevada for all people who use and or need assistive technology. By coming together, we will be able to serve more people and stop those gaps in services for individuals.
I discovered in the Nevada PEP resource library a video that is called “Positive Behavior Support in Schools.” I found it very helpful for parents who sometimes struggle with their children’s behavior in the school, home, or in the community. This video talks about behaviors at school and the way that the behaviors need to be approached taking in consideration of how every child is different. I learned that different behaviors require different solutions.

The video teaches how important it is to always have high expectations for all children. The video also shows different methods that teachers can use and ways that they can demonstrate good and bad behavior. For example, in the video the teachers modeled inappropriate behavior in front of the students during a line up in the cafeteria. In the next scene, the teachers demonstrated the right way to line up for lunch in the cafeteria. It’s important for expected behaviors to be taught and demonstrated in order for children to understand and learn the skills necessary for good behavior.

This video, as well as other informative videos, books and resources can be found in the Nevada PEP Resource Library.
New Kids in Town  
By: Stephanie Vrsnik

On September 14th, Nevada PEP took the opportunity to introduce the community to a brand new disability awareness program. The Include Me Program was established by Walter and Jackie Jagodzinski in honor of their daughter Andrea. Guests invited by Sam Lieberman, Chairman of Nevada PEP’s Board, heard from Nevada PEP’s Executive Director, Karen Taycher, and Community Development Director, Stephanie Vrsnik, about the long journey to bring these extraordinary puppets to PEP. Benefactor Jackie Jagodzinski was on hand to see “her puppets” perform in public for the first time. Congresswoman Dina Titus even came to show her support and hear what the puppets had to say. Attendees were treated to a first class puppet show. Puppets came to life thanks to some very talented volunteer puppeteers. Our puppeteers went around with their puppets while refreshments were served throughout the evening. Nevada PEP is excited to take this awesome new approach of teaching disability awareness to children of all ages and taking the message into preschools and local libraries in order to raise awareness and promote inclusion for all.

Sponsors for Include Me Open House:

- Port of Subs
- PR Plus
- Quiznos
- Trader Joes
- An Octopus Garden
- Albertsons #5881
- Albertsons #6028
- Albertsons #6088
- Great American Cookies
- Las Vegas Beverage
- Milan Bakery
- Phyllis Witter
- Cakes On The Move
- Fresh & Easy Market
- Balloon Brigade
- Get Fresh Sales
- Silver Springs Water

Congratulations to Nikki Weiland for winning our Include Me artist contest. We were looking for an artist to paint a community for our Puppets. Nikki met that challenge and gave our puppets a beautiful community to call their own. Thank you, Nikki—you did an awesome job!!!

Nevada PEP would like to recognize our newest Include Me Sponsors. Through their generosity, the Include Me program will continue to grow.

- An Octopus Garden
- Albertsons #5881
- Albertsons #6028
- Albertsons #6088
- Great American Cookies
- Las Vegas Beverage
- Milan Bakery
- Phyllis Witter
- Cakes On The Move
- Fresh & Easy Market
- Balloon Brigade
- Get Fresh Sales
- Silver Springs Water

To learn more about our puppet shows for preschools and libraries, or to become a Sponsor call, Stephanie Vrsnik 702.388.8899 or email svrsnik@nvpep.org

www.nvpep.org
Educational Update

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver

What is Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waiver Flexibility?

ESEA Waiver Flexibility is the opportunity for states to waive some of the provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. Until Congress passes a law that changes NCLB, states are being given the chance to request waivers of certain portions of the law from the United States Department of Education. To qualify for flexibility, states must have a comprehensive plan that contains student growth measurement and accountability. Nevada Department of Education is working with local school districts to develop a waiver application for submission next year. Currently, more than 40 states have indicated their intent to request ESEA Flexibility.

What must be included in this waiver flexibility application from a state?

*The US Department of Education has developed four principles that must be included in the application.*

**Principle 1** – College and Career-ready expectations for all students which include:

- adopting Common Core Standards
- align high-quality assessments that measure student growth

**Principle 2** – State-Developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support systems that set Annual Measurable Objectives.

- Reward schools – Provide incentives and recognition for high progress and highest performing Title 1 schools.
- Priority Schools - Identify lowest-performing schools and implement interventions aligned with turnaround principles.
- Focus Schools – Close achievement gaps by identifying and implementing interventions in Title I schools with the greatest achievement gaps, low-performing subgroups, or low graduation rates.

**Principle 3** - Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

- State and school district develop and implement teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that are likely to improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students.

**Principle 4** - Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden

- Remove the duplicative and burdensome reporting requirements that have little or no impact on student outcomes.

Each state’s application must provide a detailed approach for implementing the principles and show how the state and the schools would increase the quality of instruction and improve student achievement/outcomes. The waiver application requirements will put positive pressure on states to enhance their approach to accountability, teachers, and improving the education of students in struggling schools.

Parents may see more of these principles implemented at their child’s school as Nevada moves toward adopting the Growth Model. The Nevada Growth Model measures how much a student improves in academic performance over time, rather than simply whether he or she passed a test. For more information on ESEA waivers and the Growth Model, visit these websites:

http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility

Adapted from Nevada Department of Education, presentation to SEAC.  
Adapted from US Department of Education - Answers to Teachers Questions About ESEA Waivers.

Volunteer Corner

Volunteering at its Finest!!!

By: Diane Lombardo

Can I get anyone to agree with me when I say “Yes, indeed, we live in a busy world?” Today, when people step out of their own busy lives to help someone else, they certainly deserve recognition. Nevada PEP has always been privileged to have the communities most generous hearts give of their time and talent to our VIP Volunteer Connection Program.

It is with great honor that we pay tribute to the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for a remarkable contribution to Nevada PEP. Over forty church families came to the PEP Central office on Saturday, September 17th and worked for hours taping and labeling over 7,000 training flyers for bulk mailing. They finished thousands in record time. Everyone brought prepared dishes for a pot luck lunch. However, when the volunteers finished way before noon, they eagerly started on another helpful project for PEP.

They managed to assemble over 200 information packets in addition to the training flyers. Everyone gathered together enjoying great food and few laughs during a well deserved luncheon. Nevada PEP’s very own Governing Board member, Mr. Bryce Loveland, shared that the Bishop and all members of the congregation are enthusiastic about doing another volunteer experience here at PEP in the near future. This was a very positive family experience and exemplifies the very meaning of volunteering in support of the Nevada PEP mission.

With great gratitude,
Nevada PEP
**My Family Story - A Mother’s Courage**

By: Dorothia Coleman

Raising a child with a disability has given me courage and has taught me to strive for success and never lose hope. The birth of my son, John, was so enjoyable; he was so loveable. I felt truly blessed. By the time my son was toddler, I noticed his delayed speech. For example, he would grunt or babble, unable to verbalize his wants and needs. There were other times when John would repeat words he had just heard like a parrot or echolalia, and his giggles were rare. He seemed preoccupied with his own world. I thought that this behavior was unusual compared to other children of his age group.

I immediately reached out to his pediatrician and a psychologist for an evaluation. Based on the evaluation and behavior, John was diagnosed with autism. I was informed by the psychologist that autism is a brain disorder associated with a wide spectrum of developmental problems, especially in communication and social interest.

These signs of autism in my child were one of the most difficult facts for me to accept. Unable to communicate with my son, I felt lost and alone. It’s like having a prescription, but no one can fill it. With the help of speech therapy, John spoke his first word, “Papa,” at the age of five. That was a huge success.

Over the years, I have learned more about this disability through my affiliation with nonprofit organizations like Nevada PEP and Autism Speaks of America. Their resources and services have assisted me with advocacy for my son. Today, John is a senior in High School and works on a ranch with horses where he works independently and occasionally responds to incoming calls. He speaks well and expresses his needs. Amazing!

John has taught me patience and how to celebrate his every accomplishment. Finally, with autism, there are options, help, and most importantly, support. Through it all, I now have hope.

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**System of Care Update**

**Youth Suicide Prevention Summit Update**

By: Timothy Taycher

During Suicide Prevention Week, Nevada PEP partnered with the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium (CCCMHC), the Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention, and the Public Education Foundation to hold a Youth Suicide Prevention Summit. The Summit brought together community leaders and others affected by youth suicide to develop a local action plan that can be included into the CCCMHC’s 10-Year Strategic Plan.

The Summit participants were inspired by the keynote address of Laurie Flynn, the Executive Director of TeenScreen National Center at Columbia University, a panel of leaders from the Southern Nevada Health District, the Clark County Departments of Family Services and Juvenile Justice Services, Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, University Medical Center, Clark County School District, Nevada Insurance Commission and Mental Health Commission, the mental health provider community, and family members.

Summit participants identified five top priorities for youth suicide prevention. These include expansion of universal mental health screening for middle-school students and adding socio-emotional skill training to the middle-school curriculum. The participants suggested working with medical licensing boards to include suicide prevention training as part of their continuing education efforts. There was also a proposal to provide emergency medical coverage for uninsured youth in emergency rooms so they can access inpatient care as needed. Finally, participants recommended cross-system information sharing to enhance the success of all youth suicide prevention efforts.
Opportunities for Inclusion Expand

By: Karen Taycher

Nevada has developed a new collaborative to improve outcomes for children with disabilities in early childhood programs. The project is called Expanding Opportunities. The collaborators will work to increase the opportunities for successful inclusion of children with disabilities in typical early childhood settings. The following principles will guide their work.

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and developing and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high-quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports. For more information of this great new collaboration, contact the Nevada Department of Education.

Nevada PEP has a wonderful team. Their dedication and longevity to Nevada PEP is truly admired and recognized. The following staff members have made their anniversaries in the past months: (from left to right) Cynthia Escamilla - 6 Years, Stephanie Vrsnik 11 Years, Christa Peterson - 2 Years, Diane Lombardo - 6 Years, Kiara Estill - 2 Years, Whitney Sadow - 1 Year, Char Gumber - 1 Year, and Jennifer Cunningham 5 Years.

My Child has ADHD and the teacher has commented that my child’s fidgeting is distracting other students. What can we add to the IEP to help my child in the classroom?

Hyperactivity can be very distracting in the classroom. Excess motor movement can be a characteristic of the students who have poor attending skills. The following accommodations could be considered after they are discussed with your child’s IEP team to help minimize the distraction:

- Allow the student to stand or walk around between periods of direct instruction/assignments.
- Provide opportunities for “Seat Breaks,” like having the student run errands.
- Provide fidget objects. These objects can include worry beads, Wiki Styx, and squeeze balls—anything that can be quietly squished or handled.

If after implementing these types of accommodations for a period of time, the child is still distracting other children, the IEP team could collect additional information by using a Functional Behavioral Assessment. Nevada PEP offers Understanding ADHD and Individualized Educational Program (IEP) Clinic workshops that help parents learn more about how accommodations can be added to a child’s IEP. Visit our website to sign up for trainings at www.nvpep.org.
Las adaptaciones y modificaciones se incluyen en la mayoría de IEPs. Adaptaciones son una alteración del ambiente, equipo (Tecnología Auxiliar), o formato de estudios que ayuda a los estudiantes con discapacidad de tener acceso a contenido y completar tareas asignadas. Una modificación es un cambio en los exámenes, calificación, o currículo. Cualquier adaptación o modificación que está en un IEP debe basarse en las necesidades individuales del estudiante. Los educadores quien conocen el estudiante mejor deben estar en el equipo de IEP al decidir adaptaciones y modificaciones.

Un ejemplo de adaptación es proporcionar apoyo positivo, como al elogiado de la finalización de trabajo, las tareas de grabación en un cuaderno, o buen comportamiento. Refuerzo positivo apoya el aprendizaje del estudiante y aumenta su autoestima. El aprendizaje se hace más agradable cuando el estudiante se siente que tiene éxito.

El permiso del uso de una calculadora en exámenes es un ejemplo de una modificación. Es importante recordar que algunas modificaciones no pueden ser usadas en exámenes estandarizadas incluso los exámenes de aptitud de escuela secundaria entonces es importante asegurarse que la modificación del currículo no va a obstaculizar el estudiante se capaz de aprobar con éxito una exámen.
Cyber Bullying: Awareness and Prevention  By: Samantha King

In the age of technology, both youth and adults are enjoying all that computers, cell phones, and the internet can provide. The 21st century has identified many devices that improve the lives of people by helping them become more efficient in their work and play. While these forms of communication have much to offer, they are also being used as a tool for a widespread phenomenon known as cyberbullying.

Cyber bullying is when a child, pre-teen or teen uses technology such as the internet, cell phone, or any other digital means to torment, harass, intimidate, or threaten a peer. Children who use technology to bully others may use differing methods such as texting, emails, or sending pictures or personal information to others. Children bully for different reasons such as revenge, frustration, retaliation or ego-boosting. Regardless of the reason, parents, schools, and children can work together to stop it.

Parents can practice self-determination and self-advocacy skills with their youth by helping them to strengthen their sense of self, encouraging self-confidence, and boosting their self-esteem by focusing on their children’s strengths and abilities. Children who are self-determined are more likely to speak up against a bullying situation which is key in preventing a reoccurrence.

Visit with your son or daughter:
www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/#/home
www.stopcyberbullying.org

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” Speak out against bullying!!

Nevada PEP Takes Steps to Stop Bullying  By: Stephanie Vrsnik

Recognizing October as National Bullying Prevention month, Nevada PEP partnered with Tivoli Village and held its first Bullying Prevention Walk on Sunday October 23rd. Nevada PEP’s board chair, Sam Lieberman, officially kicked off the walk by introducing TJ Quicksilver, a.k.a. Captain Jack Sparrow, who promotes bullying prevention in his “Fear No Bully” program. Taylor Barton, Las Vegas’ very own NASCAR driver, joined in leading the walk. Taylor runs the Taylor Barton Foundation. Taylor speaks to youth and promotes the foundation’s message that “no one is alone.” The community came out to participate in the walk and proudly wore the “PEP Takes Steps to STOP Bullying” t-shirts. Bringing awareness to bullying signs were placed throughout the walk for participants to read. Nevada PEP plans to make this an annual event. Tivoli Village merchants were especially generous in donating over $300 in gift cards for our raffle prize. Nevada PEP would like to thank the following businesses for donating and supporting this very important event:

Sponsors for Bullying Walk
• All-Star Balloons  • Republic of Couture
• The Sign Man  • Ritual-Salon & Spa
• Holy Sheets  • Leone Café
• PETRA  • Southwest Special Dee’s
• Brio  • The Dog House
• VASARI

Check out the Bullying Awareness Walk video on the Nevada PEP youtube channel:
www.youtube.com/nevadapep
If your son or daughter has been bullied, you may be trying to understand why this is happening and looking for information. Did you know the following?

- The National Center for Education Statistics stated in the 2008–2009 school year that about a quarter of high school students were bullied at least once during the year, and about 7 percent were bullied online by other student.
- High school students, most of the time, will not be open about bullying. Where nearly fifty percent of middle-school students will report bullying, less than half of high-schoolers will notify an adult ally.
- In October 2010, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights put public schools on notice of the importance of reducing student-on-student harassment and bullying. As a result many schools have provided security guards and cameras, heightened staff supervision, and inclusion of anti-bullying measures in student codes of conduct to prevent bullying.
- In July 2011, the Nevada Legislature passed additional revisions to the Provision of a Safe and Learning Environment Act to strengthen laws requiring schools to respond, address, and document bullying incidents. By providing bullying prevention training to school personnel and prohibiting school officials from preventing the reporting of a bullying incident, the goal is to create an environment that is free of bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment, and intimidation.

As a parent of a youth with a disability, it is important to recognize the traits that may put your youth at greater risk of being bullied. Parents can help their high-schooler develop a plan to build the skills and strategies to avoid bullying behavior.

Other useful sites might include:
- www.pacer.org/bullying
- www.AbilityPath.org
- www.stompoutbullying.org
- www.flipthe<script>now.org
- www.nvpep.org

Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace:
- www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-29
- Nevada law on harassment:
  - www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-200.html#NRS200Sec571
- Provision of a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment:
  - www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Legal/LawLibrary/NRS/NRS-388.html#NRS388Sec121

Bullying: A Solution Story

By: Robin Renshaw

As an adult with a disability, it’s disheartening to see kids being bullied because they have a disability. In my case, I believe my bullying experience occurred due to ignorance or a lack of understanding, not just meanness.

On the first day at my new high school, I entered the building and rolled down the hallway in my electric wheelchair. There were a couple of students leaning against the wall looking at me. I could see they had just seen me saying, “hi,” to someone else. I heard them as they whispered to each other. They commented on how stupid my voice sounded and began to mock me. As they were doing so, they turned backs towards me as if they didn’t want me or anyone else to see what they were doing.

After thinking about it for a few seconds, I decided to approach them. As I rolled up to them, I saw they were embarrassed because they were fidgeting around and didn’t know what to do. I stuck my hand out to the one guy to shake his hand and introduced myself. After we shook hands, the other guy extended his hand out for me to shake as well.

From that day on, I didn’t have any more bad experiences with them. Instead, they got to know me and started hanging around with me. We got so close that before graduation, one of them came up to me and said that he was going to miss me. For them, they just didn’t know about my disability; for me, I had to teach them about my disability.

The PACER Center (pacer.org) suggests the following areas to work on with children who have disabilities to develop the skills and strategies so as to lessen the potential of becoming the target of bullying:

- Watch for gaps in social skills or knowledge of social norms.
- Teach your child self-advocacy skills.
- Teach independent problem-solving methods.
- Help your children understand their disabilities and ways to communicate with others this understanding (including their peers).
- Encourage peer relationships. Having friends and learning social skills are important steps in reducing vulnerability to bullying behavior.
- Use the Individual Educational Program (IEP) to develop goals and objectives to prevent the child from becoming a target.

Working on these areas will help a teenager develop good self-determination skills that transfer into adult situations as well. Unfortunately, bullying does not stop when a student graduates from high school. Individuals could experience bullying in the postsecondary setting or even in the workplace. Teaching our youth about tolerance, understanding and acceptance of all persons in any setting is key to creating a bully-free community. Whether at school, in the community, at work or in college, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) maintains that when bullying and harassment is based on race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, it violates the civil rights laws that OCR enforces in public settings, schools, and agencies. The OCR can be contacted at:
http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactusresults.cfm
Or by calling 1-800-421-3481.

Other useful sites

www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-29
Nevada law on harassment:
www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-200.html#NRS200Sec571
Provision of a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment:
www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Legal/LawLibrary/NRS/NRS-388.html#NRS388Sec121
Welcome to our newest edition of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program! This program honors and recognizes the extraordinary people who have made a difference in our lives and in the lives of our children with special needs. We have wonderful and truly devoted people throughout the state of Nevada who have given that extra hand to help our children. So sit back and enjoy these heartfelt stories!

Anagladys Ghiorsi
Teacher

I appreciate the help of God through Anagladys. Because she has been there since my daughter was 4 years old at Head Start. She helped teach my daughter lots of things. She does so with a lot of patience and love.

Dunia Yescas
Parent

Dallas McCord
Principal – Turning Point School

Ms. McCord is always there helping me out. She is the greatest principal in the world. My mom thinks she helps me out when I have rough times. She will always help me through it all. Ms. McCord is the only person I can think of that best deserves this award.

Michael Jaeger
Student

Carol & Rusty Olk
Family Friends

We are so lucky to have such great people next door, true friends. I am a single mother and our family is back east. Carol and Rusty took us into their family with open arms. They help me with my son and watch him when they can. They love him and he loves them. I will never forget all they do.

Genevieve McSweeney
Mom

Dorena Ash
Nevada PEP

You have no idea what an angel you are. From the moment I sat down with you that day at the PEP office, I felt less alone in the nightmare our lives were in. Finally, there was someone who understood our fears and who knew the frustration of trying to get help when there was none that we knew of. You listened- that in itself was more comforting than you will ever know. I owe so much to you. You were a hand holding me onto the end of a very thin rope, giving me hope and help when I thought there was no hope left. You were a source of information in a jumble of paperwork that seems designed to confuse parents into giving up. You are truly a special woman; an answer to a prayer I thought was never going to be answered. You were put in our lives for a reason and your help has done more than just help our son. Your ability to ease a frazzled mother is a gift not many possess. You gave us a wealth of places to contact and you went that extra mile, to find even more. Your never-ending digging has lead us to a place we never thought we would be. Our son is finally where he needs to be to start on the road to a much better quality of life and Phil & I are finally able to breathe. There are not enough words to say thank you for all you’ve done. We are so grateful that you entered our lives. Please continue to do what you do. There are others that need your help. And when your day is done and you are dog tired just remember that Phil & I are thinking of you and telling someone how blessed we are because you took a moment to enter our lives and listen to a crying mom who had no clue. You are definitely the guiding light through the darkness.

Phillip & Julie Davis
Parents

Luis Martinez
Student


Alda Preciado
Parent
Kiara Estill  
*Nevada PEP*

Before I met Kiara, I was a single mother of a son with Autism and ADHD. I had been doing it all on my own and I felt like I was lost in the system. Kiara really went above and beyond to point me in the right direction. She gave me insight and knowledge that was truly invaluable. More than anything, however, Kiara provided me with friendship. She opened her arms and really listened what I had to say. She always checked up on me and made me feel like I wasn’t just another number. Thank you, Kiara.

Wendy Johnson  
*Parent*

Marifloyd Wright  
*Speech Teacher*

Marifloyd was my son’s speech teacher. She came every week for 11 months. I would like to recognize her because she is amazing. She really truly cared about my son and his development. She always stayed after her time was up if she wasn’t getting what she wanted from him. She always gave 100% and we are truly grateful for her services and the time she gave to my son and all the children she serviced. It is not about the paycheck she really cares! My son is doing so much better because of her and my mind is at ease with all the information she provided and advice she gave.

Brenda Miller  
*Parent*

Monica Zamora  
*Information Services Director*

Monica has a way of bringing out the BEST in everyone she comes into contact with. Her warm confidence in our abilities makes coming to work a pleasure and a joy. She’s always available to answer all of our questions regardless of how small. Monica encourages us to trust our own knowing in ways that we have never previously encountered. She has an effortless ability to give and share wisdom from the heart. She also approaches all people in a non-judgmental way.

Monica is an advocate, friend, and supervisor full of passion, understanding and integrity. She has made a lasting impression in the lives of each of us. We hope that she will carry us always with her in mind and heart. She is very helpful and always encourages us to do better. Monica is a person of diverse talents and the lessons that she taught us carry us through our day. We measure everything by the bar that is set by her. She is an awesome trainer with everlasting patience and kindness.

Monica has an amazing spirit that has touched and positively changed us forever. She is very sweet and we have never had a supervisor that is so caring about her team before. We wish her goodness and love and we know that she is destined for greatness and will be successful in whatever she chooses to do. Thank you Monica, for being a wonderful boss!

_The Information Services Department (Past & Present)_

Ms. Goodman  
*Valley High School*

I would like to thank Ms. Goodman for being very helpful and understanding. She is also patient and shows genuine concern about my son’s well being. She has connected us with a lot of help we didn’t know that we could get, making our lives much easier and enabling us to cope better with issues.

Lourdes Garcia  
*Parent*

Nikki Weiland  
*Student/Artist*

Nevada PEP is honored to recognize Nikki Weiland for her commitment to creating a beautiful mural for our Include Me puppets. When the word went out that Nevada PEP was looking for an artist to paint our puppets their own community, Nikki sent in her ideas. After winning our art contest Nikki came into the PEP office over the summer and painted a community for our puppets. She spent long days prepping and outlining the mural. Her creativity and talent gave us the perfect community for our puppets. Thank you Nikki for your time and dedication to this project, our puppets love their new home.

_With much appreciation, Nevada PEP_

Tom Taycher  
*Coach of Challenger Little League*

On behalf of our family and ALL the Challenger Little League families, you rock hard. You guys are the best!! We all remain, so grateful for all your dedication to and for all the players the time you spend on and with baseball Does NOT go unnoticed. We love you thank you so very much without you the world as us parents know it would be a dark place!!

_The Leavitt family_

All the Challenger Little League Families  
All our Supporters
Winter is a great time for arts and crafts, especially when those crafts include yummy winter goodies! This activity is perfect for children to work on their fine motor skills.

Give each child two large marshmallows, three pretzel sticks, and a couple of raisins or jelly beans. Have the child poke a pretzel stick into the middle of one of the marshmallows. Next, place the other marshmallow on the pretzel stick. Use the other two pretzel sticks as arms. Use the raisins or jelly beans for the eyes, nose, and mouth.

This festive snowman is sure to make a great decoration or snack!

Adapted from:
http://www.preschoolrainbow.org/preschool-winter.htm
Hand in Hand Sponsors

Platinum Sponsors
Glen & Ande Christenson

Gold Sponsors
William Filipic

Silver Sponsors
Andrew and Patricia Leavitt
Scott & Ariel Linker

Hand in Hand Sponsors
Thank you to all of our amazing Hand in Hand Sponsors for their generous support. Their contribution continues to make it possible to honor and recognize the extraordinary people who support Nevada’s children and families. For more information on becoming a Hand in Hand sponsor, contact Nevada PEP or go to www.nvpep.org

Set your goals high, and don’t stop till you get there.
- Bo Jackson

William Altman
High School Teacher

Mr. Altman has been our son’s favorite high school teacher for the past 3 years. He’s an outstanding instructor, excellent role model and is so very patient with our son’s placement after graduation. Mr. Altman guided us through the application process for the PACE program. We were thrilled and so proud when out son was chosen to attend the Northwest career and Technical Academy. His self-esteem and confidence have gone sky high. Thanks to Mr. Altman’s guidance and support. We are proud to know this hard-working, dedicated professional who has definitely earned this special recognition.

David & Carol Gaberel
Parents

Sam Thomas
LVHS Head Baseball Coach

Las Vegas High School Baseball coaches and team, thank you so very much for taking the time to “mentor” and appear at the 20th Anniversary opening day for Challenger Little League baseball!!! Your presence was so far reaching and so much appreciated. You may never fully understand the full affects of your actions but we appreciate you coming out and supporting our kids. We just want to thank you all so much. On behalf of Challenger Little League, Nevada PEP and our families, we all remain so grateful to have had the players attend and be great role models for our kids.

The Leavitt Family
Nevada PEP
Challenger Little League
(Coach Tom & Kenny Taycher)

Wendy Ryan
Therapist

Wendy has gone above and beyond helping our son with his behavior and his coping skills about not being the only child. Our son has ADHD and ODD and possible Asperger’s syndrome. Wendy has taken special consideration with helping our son. She is helping him to understand words that a child his age should know. She is also helping him to understanding facial expressions on his level.

Scott & Sonne Ouellette
Parents
The “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” appreciation program recognizes those individuals who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with disabilities. Nevada PEP would like to help you give recognition to a special person for their outstanding efforts. You may nominate a teacher, professional, therapist, family member or someone whose efforts have had a positive impact on a child’s life. All nominees will be honored with a uniquely designed lapel pin and a certificate of recognition. Their “story” will be featured in our quarterly newsletter, as well as appear in Nevada PEP’s Annual “Hand in Hand” Yearbook. Please limit your entries to ONE nominee per form and no more than three nominations a year per family. Please limit each story to one hundred words or less.

Your Name: _________________________________________________________
Your Address: ________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip Code: _________________________________________________
Your Phone, Email, Fax (optional) ______________________________________

Your permission to use your name and print your story:  □ yes  □ no

Name of Honoree: ____________________________________________________
Honoree’s Address: ___________________________________________________
City, State, Zip Code: _________________________________________________
Honoree’s Phone Number: ____________________________________________

Please write your story about this special person here:

2101 South Jones Blvd Suite 120, Las Vegas, NV 89146
Fax: (702) 388-2966 / Email: pepinfo@nvpep.org
Mission Statement
To increase the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

Annual Membership Information
Annual membership dues are $25.00 per family, organization or professional.

Please provide the following information

NAME

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE    ZIP

PHONE    email

CHILD’S NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

☐ I am a parent/caregiver.
☐ I am a professional working with children.
☐ I am a concerned member of the community.
☐ Enclosed is a tax deductible donation in the amount of $___________ to help support the efforts of Nevada PEP.
☐ I would like to be a member of Nevada PEP, please waive the annual dues.
☐ I would like to volunteer.
☐ I would like to receive the monthly E-POST.

Nevada PEP, Inc. is an independent non-profit tax exempt organization. #88-0301113

Please make checks payable to: Nevada PEP

The Nevada PEP PTI Center was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Contents of the “PEP POST” do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and endorsement is not assumed.

Nevada PEP Social Networks

In This Issue

• Parents Make the Difference
• PEP Takes Steps to STOP Bullying
• A.T. for All
• A Mother’s Courage
• Steps To Transition
• System of Care Update
• New Kids in Town
• Cyber Bullying
• Bullying Solution Story
• Las Vegas Chamber Luncheon

VISIT US ONLINE AT www.nvpep.org

“The only way of finding the limits of the possible is by going beyond them into the impossible.”

- Arthur C. Clarke

Nevada PEP is a participating agency for:

United Way of So. Nevada Designated gift # 2192
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