2008 Yearbook

A Collection of Stories Honoring Those Who Serve Families of Children with Special Needs

October, 2008
Nevada PEP
2355 Red Rock Street, Ste. 106
Las Vegas, Nevada 89146
Phone: 702.388.8899
Fax: 702.388.2966

Satellite Office
4600 Kietzke Lane, Ste. O-269
Reno, Nevada 89502
Phone: 775.448.9950
Fax: 775.448.9603

Email: pepinfo@nvpep.org
Statewide: 800.216.5188

www.nvpep.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What Is Nevada PEP?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The History of the Hand in Hand Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>2007-2008 Annual Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Letter from the Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>Department Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>Professional Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Volunteer Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Letter of Support from Senator Barbara K. Cegavske</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Letter of Support from Nevada’s First Lady Dawn Gibbons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-27</td>
<td>7th Annual Baldy Bash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Operation Baldy Bash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Baldy Bash Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>3rd Annual Children’s Art Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-38</td>
<td>Hand in Hand Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-42</td>
<td>Hand in Hand Sponsors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Thank You to Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Stages of Sponsorship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our 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.
What Is Nevada PEP?

PEP is Nevada’s statewide Parent Training and Information Center for families who have children with disabilities and the professionals who support them. Nevada PEP believes that the family is the fundamental unit in the society. Children with disabilities, without regard for the nature and severity of the disability, have an inherent value, that all life has a purpose, that communities benefit from providing appropriate interventions and that citizens with disabilities make valuable contributions to society.

Who Should Call?

- Parents of children with special needs, illness, and disabilities.
- Parents of children with mental health needs.
- Parents needing encouragement and support from other parents.
- Family members, friends and persons with disabilities.
- Professionals in the medical, educational, and human service fields.
- Community Leaders who make decisions about programs of support for children with disabilities and their families.

What Services Does PEP Offer?

- Information and Referral
- Statewide Lending Library
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Conflict Resolution Support
- Individual Assistance
- Parent Mentors and Advocates
- Training Workshops
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Family Support Services
The “Hand In Hand, Together We Can” appreciation program was designed to proudly recognize and honor special people who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with disabilities. The program began in October, 2002 when Hand In Hand forms were mailed to thousands of interested parents and professionals across the state of Nevada. With each special story sent to us, Nevada PEP delivered the Hand in Hand award recipient a beautiful certificate and lapel pin to display as a proud supporter of Nevada’s community of people with disabilities. The stories are also recognized in our quarterly PEP Post newsletter. The inspiring stories you are about to read are celebrations of wonderful teachers, doctors, therapists, family members, and many others who have worked with children with disabilities and have gone above and beyond their call of duty. Touching and original, the stories in our 2008 Yearbook span over a one year period. We at Nevada PEP are excited to honor these very special Hand In Hand recipients and will continue to do so throughout the years to come.
“In this day and age of very complicated environments, Nevada PEP provides an invaluable service to families to educate and empower them. When everyone works together to provide nurturing support, all children can succeed! Hand in hand -- yes we can!”

- Terri Peltier, Board Member
As the Chairperson of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, I am proud to share with you our accomplishments over the last year. At Nevada PEP, we measure our success by families calling us just to say “thank you for being there just when we needed you.” We succeed when a parent calls to say “my child is doing so much better in school,” or “my child is learning to read or write.” Nevada PEP continues to offer families the support and information they need so that they can be their child’s advocate, ensuring every child receives the opportunity they deserve. Nevada PEP grows every time we share our mission with the people in our state through media, committees or one parent sharing her success story with another.

Our Fiscal Year 2007-2008 was an exciting and productive year for Nevada PEP. A milestone achievement of 2007 was when Nevada PEP co-chaired the “Families First” statewide conference, educating over 350 parents on topics such as Early Intervention, ADHD, and Positive Behavioral Interventions. Another important milestone of 2007 was when Nevada PEP collaborated with the Nevada Department of Education on the Rules, Rights and Relationships annual conference, with over 200 parents and professionals participating. A media milestone occurred when Nevada PEP, with the assistance of the Clark County Children Mental Health Consortium’s Public Awareness Committee, helped create three PSAs on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. These PSAs aired on cable television stations and in theaters throughout the summer.

As we begin a new year we are faced with many challenges. With the economic downfall, services are being reduced or eliminated, families are struggling. Nevada PEP has seen a dramatic increase in the need for our services. Your support at this time is more vital now than ever. Nevada PEP remains committed to supporting the ongoing needs of children and youth with disabilities and their families as they strive to become successful adults living life to their full potential and benefitting their communities, the workplace, and society as a whole.

Nevada PEP believes that the family is the fundamental unit in society and that regardless of the severity of the disability, children with disabilities have an inherent value. We believe that all life has a purpose that communities benefit from providing appropriate interventions and that individuals with disabilities make a valuable contribution to society.

Thank you to our valuable partners, generous donors and dedicated volunteers who continue to believe in our mission. We are looking forward to celebrating our 16th year of providing excellent support and information to our families who have children with disabilities in Nevada. Together we are building a stronger community for all.

- Sam Lieberman, Nevada PEP Chair
“PEP is an excellent parent training and information center. They are a great resource to parents and to our school districts. They do not come in to battle, they come in to find solutions.”

- Administrator

“Honesty and integrity are often in short supply in this town but there is never a shortage at Nevada PEP.”

- Medical Provider
Nevada PEP offers training opportunities for parents, students and professionals. Trainings are conducted throughout Nevada. Core training topics include: Understanding ADHD, IEP Clinics, Positive Behavioral Interventions, Bullying and Literacy. Other trainings address the IEP process, are done in collaboration with community agencies, or are presented by special request. The information obtained is used to help provide better services for children with special needs.

Community Trainings

Training Participants

211 Training Workshops were conducted in 2008 with 3,945 participants.

- Parent

“We knew how important PEP really was to us when we moved and you were the first one we called with a new address because we didn’t want to miss a beat with you. That’s how much you mean to our family.”

“After talking to you, I know I can do this. I found my strength in your voice.”

- Parent
Thank you. I have never spoken to anyone who gave me the support you have. Thanks for listening.”

-Parent

“Thank you. I have never spoken to anyone who gave me the support you have. Thanks for listening.”

-Parent

Volunteer Contributions

Nevada PEP encourages volunteers, board members and family members to be involved in their communities. Students, parents, professionals and the general public have donated over 5,000 hours of valuable service to Nevada PEP. Volunteers provide office assistance by helping with general office tasks: answering telephones, copying, faxing, assisting with bulk mail, filing office forms and assembling training packets. Volunteers assist with community fairs, special events, outreach, public awareness, trainings and support groups. Nevada PEP encourages family and student involvement at task forces, focus groups and committee meetings. Thank you to all of the valuable volunteers who contributed to Nevada PEP.

| Volunteer Hours: | 5,088 |

Was the information presented at the workshop useful to you? .....Yes, 100%

Because of the information you received at the workshop, do you feel you are more knowledgeable about how to work with schools? .....Yes, 92%

Has your child received more appropriate services because of the information you have received from the Parent Center? .....Yes, 84%

Have you shared the information you have received from the workshop with other families? .....Yes, 72%

Because of the information you received at the workshop, were you able to work with the school to address a critical need related to your child’s education? .....Yes, 72%

Has the workshop provided you with the information you needed to make decisions about your child’s education? .....Yes, 84%
Support Services for Individuals

Nevada PEP provides support services by first providing Information & Referral Services and helping parents find their way through the maze of services. Another important support service is individual assistance which targets the specific needs of the individual or family. If a family requires additional support, Nevada PEP attends Education, Wraparound, or Child & Family Team meetings. For further support, Nevada PEP visits families in their homes.

“I have an IEP meeting about my son today. Because of what a great job PEP has done with me, I can do it on my own. Thank you for always being there for me.”

-Parent

“I love to see PEP at these meetings. It is proof that our parents are getting the training and information they deserve.”

-Teacher

How useful was the information you received from your contact with the Parent Center?

Very Useful: 96%
Not Useful: 4%

The Parent Center provided me with the information I needed to make decisions about my child’s education.

-Parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Meetings</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child &amp; Family Team Meetings</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visits</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Individual Assistance Contacts</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assistance Contacts</td>
<td>10,742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“As a social worker in the school, we often receive referrals for children and families struggling to locate needed services and your program is a valuable resource to them.”

-Social Worker

“It’s wonderful to see the community pull together for our kids. I will continue to be a part of PEP!”

-Community Agency

Nevada PEP provides outreach presentations for advocacy organizations, service providers, professional organizations and parent groups throughout Nevada. By educating community members, Nevada PEP continually enhances understanding of the needs of children with disabilities and families.

Top 10 Reasons People Contact Nevada PEP

- Family Support: 18%
- Sp Education/IEPs: 19%
- Transition: 3%
- Advocacy: 23%
- Disability: 19%
- Behavioral Issues: 19%
- Parental Involvement: 8%
- Assessments: 2%
- Placement: 2%
- Related Services: 1%

Number of people reached from community outreach and public awareness: 33,548
Number of meetings attended to enhance the support systems for children with special needs and their families: 433
Number of committees to which Nevada PEP representatives provided advocacy and the parent perspective: 110
Number of public forums, back-to-school fairs, and health fairs in which Nevada PEP has participated: 62
Consumer Relationships

- Advocates: 2%
- Foster Parents: 1%
- General Public: 18%
- Other Educators: 2%
- Other Relatives: 10%
- Parents: 62%
- Service Providers: 2%
- Special Educators: 1%
- Students: 1%
- Surrogate Parents: 1%

Ages of Children Helped

- 0 to 2: 2%
- 3 to 5: 11%
- 6 to 11: 40%
- 12 to 14: 24%
- 15 to 18: 24%
- 19 to 21: 1%
- 22 to 26: 1%

Ethnicities of Consumers

- Caucasian: 67%
- Hispanic: 16%
- African American: 10%
- Asian: 3%
- Native American: 1%

Disabilities

- Non Disabled: 2%
- Orthopedic: 1%
- Visual/Blind: 1%
- Emotional: 24%
- Learning Disability: 11%
- Autism: 13%
- Traumatic Brain Inj.: 1%
- Hearing/Deaf: 1%
- ADD/ADHD: 19%
- Speech/Language: 2%
- Multiple: 3%
- Health/Medical: 6%
- Mental Retardation: 4%
- Devel. Delay: 4%
- Undiagnosed: 8%

The PEP team is dedicated and extremely informative. I appreciate PEP for having services like this.”

- Other Relative
Nevada PEP has formed strong relationships throughout the community with corporations, professional organizations, and informed individuals. Creating partnerships with the private and nonprofit sectors to extend Nevada PEP’s mission has had powerful and positive results on families across Nevada. Our donors, participants, and volunteers truly impact families of children with disabilities at both the state and national level. By becoming a Nevada PEP Sponsor, you become a part of families’ success.

Over the past year, Nevada PEP has raised over $62,000 to help support its mission. It is only through the continued support and commitment of our special communities partners that we continue to grow. Our greatest need is for corporate sponsors. In giving to Nevada PEP, you will be rewarded with a lifetime of achievement and partnership.

To Donate...
Visit our website at www.nvpep.org to donate securely over the Internet!
Funding Sources

Major Funders

Center for Mental Health Service
*Department of Health and Human Services
*Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center

MGM Mirage Voice Foundation
Nevada Division of Child and Family Services
Nevada Department of Education
The Ritter Charitable Trust

United Way of Southern Nevada
United Advocates for Children
US Department of Education
Sam’s Club -#4974

Individual Sponsors

Cindy Alexander
Julie Beasley, Ph.D.
Brenda Bledsoe
Tim and Lynn Carlson
Dermody Properties Foundation
Karen Eisenberg
Will Filipic
Mary Francis
Merlinda Gallegos
Kathy Hughes
Timothy Josselyn

Jeff and Hilda Kelley
Denise Kline
Ron Kopicko
Kestra Kuretich
Dawn LaBonte
Robin & John Lamb
Andrew Leavitt, Esq.
Dennis M. Leavitt, Esq
Jim Leavitt, Esq.
James and Amy Leavitt
Trish Leavitt

Sam Lieberman
Robert Marshall, Esq.
Michelle Meecham
Joseph Mouzon
Carol Ann & Tanya Panou
Pamela Powers
Andres G. Resto, M.D., F.A.C.S
Danielle Smades
Kermitt L. Waters, Esq.
Craig Wetzel

Community Partners

24 Hour Fitness
Academy of Hair Design
Adele’s Restaurant and Lounge
*AGO @ The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
Albertsons #6090
Albertsons # 6048
Angel Park Golf Club
*Anthony & Mario’s Broadway Pizzeria
Anchor Auction
Art Source
Applebee’s #6010
Applebee’s #6005
Atlantis Hotel and Casino
*Austin Mountain Country Food and Spirits
Avon by Barbara Hermesky
Badlands Golf Club
Baja Fresh
Balloons with a Twist
Bass Pro Outdoor World
Bertolini’s Restaurant
Bike World
Bill Cunningham
BOA Steakhouse
Bodywork by Sarah
Body Wisdom
Boreal Ski Resort
Bonnie Springs Ranch
Brenden Theaters
Buddies Exterminating, LLC

Cactus Joe’s
Callaway Golf
Carl’s Jr.
Carson Valley Inn
Cheesecake Factory #21
Cheesecake Factory #100
Chilis # 509
Citibank
Claim Jumper # 29
Claim Jumper # 30
Coca-Cola Enterprises Bottling Companies
COSTCO # 25
COSTCO # 685
Courtyard Deli
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Sponsors, cont’d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dan Hellman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Peak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Crawford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Dr. &amp; Mrs. Ivan Goldsmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Trim Care Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Pollo Loco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado Canyon Mine Tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements Spa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Garden Florist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever After Creations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabulous Freddy’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy Clancy Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIJI Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Fleischmann Planetarium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Science Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forever Yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier Financial Credit Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Dust West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Gate Hotel &amp; Casino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Spoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymboree Play and Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Hands on Therapeutic Massage &amp; Spa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy Face Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Rock Hotel &amp; Casino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrah’s Hotel and Casino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heidi’s Family Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honeybaked Ham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot August Nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC Penney’s Salon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Rockets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump Man Jump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump N Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohl’s #1172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La-Z-Boy Furniture Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Mead Cruises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Cleaners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake’s Mansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas Fire &amp; Rescue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas Motor Speedway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaisons Salon &amp; Spa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looney 4 Balloons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowes #1639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mad Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Kay by Jessica Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimi’s Café #89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moana Nursery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montbleu Resort Casino and Spa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Lucky’s @ The Hard Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Rose Ski Resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada Chicken Café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada State Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Nothing Bundt Cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provided by Donna Zamora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Garden #1440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outback Steakhouse #3215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Becker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panda Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Maloof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink Taco @ The Hard Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato Valley Café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pump It Up Inflatable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiznos Subs #140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raley’s Supermarket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Rapscallion Seafood House and Bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Lobster #339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Robin #94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roni Josef Salon &amp; Spa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeway #1210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Planet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam’s Club #4768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammy’s Pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand Regency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scolari’s #18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See’s Candy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff’s Protective Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonic-America’s Drive-In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparks Florist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staples Advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike Zone Bowling Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower Florist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taqueria La Michoacana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Martin Tae Kwon Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaque West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tessera Glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.G.I.Friday’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Green Onion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New Las Vegas Marathon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Peppermill Hotel Casino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Resort@ Red Hawk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader Joes #98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trish Leavitt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobin James Winery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNLV Runnin’ Rebels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Special Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vons # 2613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal*Mart #3254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal*Mart #3277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal*Mart #3473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walley’s Hotsprings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Truffles Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolf Run Golf Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Wrangler Hockey Package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provided by Kathy Treants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Congratulations to the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Award recipients!!

The stories in this year book highlight many fantastic individuals throughout our state who make a positive difference in the lives of children with disabilities. The stories are a tribute to the acts of kindness we observe every day.

The award recipients show us that together, we strengthen our community as we support our children and families. From the doctor who hugs a parent when they are crying, to the teacher who believes that each child has a gift, to a philanthropist who funds necessary services, you recognize that we all have a role to play to create opportunities for children with special needs to reach for their dreams.

Thank you to the sponsors of the Hand in Hand program. It is with these important community partnerships that the appreciation program can continue to grow and honor the inspiring people who make a positive difference in the lives of our children.

“It just takes one person and sometimes one act of kindness to make a difference.”

It just takes one person and sometimes just one act of kindness to make a difference. Thank you to the families who have taken the time to show their appreciation in this special way. Nevada PEP is honored to play a role in recognizing the wonderful people that make up this Hand in Hand year book.

With Sincere Appreciation,

Karen Taycher
Executive Director
Retta Dermody, Director of Programs and Services for the Satellite Office has over 26 years of experience in special education. Retta has advocated as a mom, step-mom, and grandmother of children with special needs. Her experience includes working as a teacher’s aide in resource rooms for WCSD, and as a Child and Family Advocate and Director of Family Services for the Committee to Aid Abused Women. As the Nevada PEP Director of Programs and Services, Retta combines her responsibilities involving the “Collaborating for Children” grant and directing the Satellite Office staff, providing rural outreach, training and other individual assistance to parents and professionals. She serves as vice-chairperson on the Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium and is a member of the Rural Children’s Mental Health Consortium, as well as serving on numerous boards and committees.

Robin Kincaid brings 13 years of experience in advocating parental involvement in representing children with disabilities. As the Director of Training, Robin provides information about special education law, advocacy, best practice, parent/professional collaboration and positive behavior supports. Robin has served on the First Step/SCC Reorganization Board and the IMPRV Committee. She also helped coordinate the focus panel that developed the Parent Handbook, which has statewide circulation.
Department Directors

TJ Rosenberg is the Statewide Family Network Director for Nevada PEP. She has served in this position for the past eight years. She and her department focus on system change helping families who are involved with more than one system, focusing on children with serious emotional disturbance and behavior disorders. TJ is a parent that has had personal experience and has a son with Bi-polar Disorder and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. She has become a strong advocate through her own process of getting services and training to best serve her family and her son. She serves on many subcommittees for the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium. She is also a Wraparound trainer and does Systems training and Parent training both locally and nationally.

Stephanie Vrsnik brings over 20 years experience as an advocate. As a married mother of two adult children, one of whom with Autism, she is dedicated to the families of Nevada. As the Community Development Director, Stephanie focuses on bringing awareness to Community Leaders about the services that Nevada PEP provides to families throughout the state. She believes that working together as a community and a state brings our children a bright and successful future. Stephanie has helped to develop the Hand in Hand recognition program. She has also overseen the “Baldy Bash” which is a collaborative effort with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, to help raise awareness and funding for Nevada PEP.

Natalie Filipic is the mother of two, and grandmother of three. Natalie’s past experience includes working as a CMA in the medical field, teacher’s aide in resource classrooms for CCSD, and as a paralegal for a local attorney practicing family law. As the Director of Information Services Department, Natalie feels the most valuable experience she brings to the position is that of a parent, grandparent and advocate. Natalie herself was once a child with special needs, then raised a child of her own with special needs and is now the grandmother of a child with special needs. Natalie is honored to be a part of Nevada PEP, providing information and resources to families much like her own in hopes of empowering them to reach for their dreams.
Ellery serves PEP as a graphic designer and website specialist. She earned her B.A. with honors in Philosophy from UNLV and has worked at PEP for the past six years. She is pursuing her M.A. in Secondary Education. Amazed and inspired by her autistic younger brother’s continued success and progress as a result of advocacy, she is proud to serve an organization that enhances opportunities for those with disabilities.

Personality and compassion describe Nevada PEP’s Family Specialist Dorena Ash. Dorena has a child with a disability which allows her to give families amazing support from her own personal experiences. For over 3 years, Nevada PEP has benefitted from Dorena’s interpersonal skills, attention to detail and her overall passion for families. Dorena says that PEP is like her extended family.

Jennifer Cunningham has been with Nevada PEP since August of 2006. Then in April of 2008, she moved on to the Rural Family Specialist position. She is very excited to be in this new position and has learned a lot. She looks forward to learning more and to be able to serve families in the rural communities. She is very proud to be a part of Nevada PEP and to be able to help families that have children with serious emotional disturbances.

Cheri is the Information and Training Specialist working in the Satellite Office. After 19 IEP’S she discovered that there is wonderful help if you know where to find it, Nevada PEP. She joined Nevada PEP after a year of working with the staff on her own IEPS to work with Autism, ADHD, RAD, PTSD as well as Sensory Integration Dysfunction. It is her goal to help empower others as she has been empowered through Nevada PEP.

Hi, my name is Cynthia. I am one of the bilingual Family Specialists at Nevada PEP, hoping to reach out to the community and to be of service to the families with children of special needs. It is an honor to be part of Nevada PEP. I will be able to accomplish a life time goal of helping others. This is the gratification of a lifetime!!!

Kimberly Fincher comes to Nevada PEP with a passion for training and for children. Kimberly is the proud parent of three amazing children, ranging in age from 8-13 who constantly inspire her and keep her busy. Kimberly has earned a BA in Business Administration and has spent the last 5 years training and facilitating. Kimberly has joined Nevada PEP to combine her passions of children and training and to further her knowledge of special education and to support children and their families.
Professional Staff

Tamara Grubaugh
As the older sister of a youth with special needs Tamara began volunteering at Nevada PEP on a regular basis. Today Tamara’s unique data management skills are put to use as the Program Management Specialist at Nevada PEP. Tamara is passionately learning about advocacy for families and the resources available to them. Nevada PEP benefit daily from Tamara’s outgoing personality. She is always busy assisting all departments and finds being a part of the PEP family very rewarding.

Ron Kopicko
Ron is a Collaboration Specialist at Nevada PEP’s Satellite Office in Reno. He believes that families can have a difficult time winding their way through the bureaucratic maze that is in place to help them, yet sometimes isn’t friendly or understanding. Ron finds it rewarding to assist these families in navigating the process. Ron is glad to be a part of Nevada PEP, helping families.

Kathy Hughes
Kathy is the Statewide Family Network Coordinator and works in the Satellite Office. She has four children and two grandchildren. Kathy and her husband of thirty years have a passion for educating the community about how to support families that have children or adults with mental illness and substance abuse. They are motivated by their personal experiences with two of their children.

Flo LaRoy
Flo is a founding member of PEP and currently is the Special Projects Facilitator. She is inspired by her experiences as a parent of a child with a disability and the challenges of navigating the service delivery systems. Her passion for teaching and sharing information with parents and professionals is evident in her training workshops on positive behavioral interventions.

Kathy Hughes

Flo LaRoy

Tamara Grubaugh

Ron Kopicko

Kathy Hughes

Flo LaRoy
Diane is fulfilling a life long dream of helping people through Nevada PEP. She feels that the past couple of years have been more of a revelation than merely a work experience. Working at PEP brings out the best in her giving her renewed positive energy for her own special family. She believes strongly in the difference she is making and will continue to dedicate herself to the families she serves.

Sally is a Training Specialist at Nevada PEP. She has a bachelor’s degree in Allied Health & Rehabilitation Services from the University of Florida. She has conducted prevention and advocacy trainings with other nonprofits. Her inspiration to help families comes from watching and assisting her mother advocate for services for Sally’s younger brother who has Down Syndrome. Sally is excited to be able to provide information and support to families through Nevada PEP.

Lydia is a family specialist in Nevada PEP’s satellite office, located in Reno. Her experience comes from losing her children into the system and the path she had to walk in order to help her son receive the services he needed in school due to his disability. As she works with families everyday, she finds that she can give them the support she never had.

Deanna Macaluso is a Family Specialist who is a parent and an advocate of a child with special needs. She believes everyone deserves an education. Deanna has a great sense of humor and enjoys assisting her families in finding resources, information and advocating in the community and in the educational setting.

Robin Renshaw has been with PEP for eight years now as a Transition Specialist. He advocates for and educates youth with disabilities transitioning from middle school to high school, from high school to college, or from college to the work force. He enjoys his work at PEP because as a person with a disability, which is Cerebral Palsy, he recognizes the need for an advocacy organization in Nevada to be that voice for kids with disabilities and their families.

Jen works as a CfC Family Specialist in the Reno Satellite office. Jen says that it took one special worker who really cared about her and her family to help her realize that not only was her family in need of this kind of special care, but she could be a part of helping other families get the support they need too. Jen strives to be the same kind and caring support specialist that had once helped save her own family.

Professional Staff
Kathy Treants came to Nevada PEP in 2006 after 10 years of directing another non-profit, disability support organization. She is the “best mom” to Brianne who has given her nearly 27 years of experience in the area of advocacy and respect for the abilities of those further challenged in life. Kathy brings first-hand experience to the Transition Department as the department’s Coordinator.

My name is Lynne. I am originally from England and have been in the USA since 1987. Most of my working life has been in financial institutions so this is very different for me. I am the mother of two wonderful children one who is SED. Having received services from PEP in the past I am thrilled and excited to be here and aspire to be the best advocate I can be.

Monica is a bilingual community education specialist. She enjoys working with families and empowers them to advocate for their children. Monica is a graduate from UCI with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Social Behavior. She has experience as an ABA therapist and as a tutor for children, adolescent and adults with disabilities. Monica enjoys presenting trainings in Spanish and sharing with the local community information and experiences.
Volunteer Connection

Actions are priceless when they are the reflection of a caring and loving heart that cares about its community. Volunteering not only helps families, but it gives a sense of accomplishment and personal fulfillment. Nevada PEP provides opportunities for families, youth, school groups and other community members to experience the rewards of contributing time and effort to an organization that cares about others. We are very proud of our volunteers statewide and appreciate their commitment to Nevada PEP and the communities in which they live. Volunteering is without a doubt a “noble” profession.

CRS Volunteers Make A Difference!

Our Community Resource Specialist Volunteers are parents and professionals that represent Nevada PEP by providing information about PEP services and resources at community events, assisting in parent training and providing public awareness in their own communities throughout the State of Nevada.

VIP Program - Very Important Partners!

Nevada PEP has provided our Very Important Partners with volunteer experiences in our Central and Satellite PEP offices. Parents, students and community partners including our special school groups have volunteered their time in business related activities, community based activities and back to school fairs. Not only does Nevada PEP benefit from their assistance, the VIP volunteer learns new skills and experiences that will contribute to their success in future opportunities.

In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it.
-Marianne Williamson

The influence of a beautiful, helpful character is contagious, and may revolutionize a whole town.
-Collier Graham
The Baldy Bash is Nevada PEP’s premier fundraising event, showcasing Southern Nevada’s finest and accepting donations from the community in support of the “baldys.” On Friday October 3rd, 2008 Officer Frank Reagan from Metro officially kicked off Baldy Week when he was buzzed in front of the Clark County Detention Center, bringing awareness to the community and inviting other baldys to sign up. Sheriff Doug Gillespie lent his support by putting out the “challenge” to the Baldys which helped gain the record number of participating Baldys. On Sunday, October 12, the 7th annual Baldy Bash was held at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. This year, brave men and women from the Las Vegas Metro Police Department, Las Vegas City Fire and Rescue, Parole and Probation, Henderson Police Department, and Nevada Highway Patrol participated as baldys. Also participating this year were veteran military baldys currently deployed to “Operation Iraqi Freedom”, recruiting over 50 Baldys to produce “Operation Baldy Bash.”

The Baldys solicited funds from coworkers, family and friends to raise awareness for Nevada PEP. This year one of our Alumni Baldys came up with a pretty unique way of soliciting funds. Celebrating his 40th birthday party, he asked his guests to sponsor him in the Bash and leave a donation. As a result, he finished as one of our top three Baldys. Coming in 2nd place was Nate Pechacek from Las Vegas Fire and Rescue. Our “Top” Baldy this year was Andrew Leavitt from Las Vegas City Fire and Rescue, raising over $3,400. These lucky Baldys, and many others, were appreciated for their contribution with truly amazing support from Southern Nevada businesses. Talented Liaisons Salon & Spa stylists performed the buzzing, as they have for the past five Baldy Bashes. Liaisons has been a strong supporter of the Baldy Bash by closing their business for the day to donate their time to “buzz” the Baldys.

Over 50 baldys participated locally and the 50 in “Operation Baldy Bash”, with over 400 Baldy supporters in attendance. The Bash generated over $33,000 in community support. These kind donations will help Nevada PEP continue to offer community based support services for families of children with disabilities.
For a second year the Baldy Bash had the privilege of Las Vegas Academy sophomore student Miss Kaila M. Leavitt performing a wonderful harp rendition. The live performance was enjoyed by all. As Baldy donations were received, Citibank employees donated their time and professional accounting expertise to ensure that we accounted for every donation. The Baldy Bash kicked off with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Honor Guard posting colors to prepare for the National Anthem, sung beautifully by Lieutenant Randy Sutton. This was followed by a mesmerizing tribute to our Baldy troops in Iraq through a power point presentation highlighting their mission and sacrifice. The performance inspired appreciation for our community heroes and their dedication to Southern Nevada. The Bash began with our “Head Baldy” the Honorable James Bixler, as he proudly announced “let the buzzing begin.” Kim Sherwood-Schofield of Channel 3 has been our Master of Ceremonies since the Baldy Bash inception in 2002. In her unique and very personable way, she put the Baldys at ease by interviewing them and commending their participation. Entertainment for the kids was donated by Mad Science, Sonic the Hedgehog, Balloons with a Twist, Smokey the Bear, and UNLV volunteers who designed a fun and exciting scavenger hunt, enjoyed by all the kids.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Baldy Bash, especially Trish Leavitt, our Event Chairperson for the second straight year, and also our Baldy committee who worked tirelessly to make this event a success. A big thank you goes out to our staff who worked as a team to bring this event to fruition. We live in an amazing community that truly pulled together to support Nevada PEP. Our utmost gratitude also goes to the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino’s Save the Planet philanthropic committee for their support. Save the Planet donated the venue and wonderful appetizers. Their help throughout the planning stages and on the day of the Baldy Bash was very knowledgeable and helpful, from the catering to the audio visual support bringing community pride and support to the Baldy Bash.

Each year the Bash improves, becoming more inclusive and now, through our fine troops, extends around the world. We are grateful and proud to once again showcase the dedication of our first responders and their contributions to the children and families of Nevada.
On Sunday, October 12, 2008, the 7th annual Baldy Bash was held at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. The Baldy Bash is Nevada PEP's premier fundraising event, where first responders get their hair “buzzed” in exchange for charitable donations for families who have kids with special needs. It showcases Southern Nevada’s finest in this worthy non-profit fundraising event. This year, brave men and women from Las Vegas Metro Police Department, Las Vegas City Fire and Rescue, Nevada Highway Patrol, Henderson Police Department and our troops participated as Baldys. The Baldys solicited funds from coworkers, family, and friends to raise awareness for Nevada PEP.

This year we are proud to recognize and salute our Operation Baldys. I received an e-mail from MSgt. Paul Capinas, a Baldy from the previous year stationed at Nellis AFB. MSgt. Capinas wrote that he would like to participate but this year would be a little different because he was deployed in “Operation Iraqi Freedom.” What he wanted to do was have “Operation Baldy Bash” in Iraq. He had Baldys signed up and sent in “before” pictures. On October 11th, the Baldys buzzed and sent me “after” pictures. Nevada PEP was honored to have had our brave soldiers halfway around the world supporting families who have children with disabilities. The troops were recognized at the Bash through a PowerPoint presentation along with a moment of silence. Operation Baldy Bash raised $400.00 for our families. The event was a huge success. We are so very grateful to MSgt. Capinas for organizing this event. It is just another example of the selflessness and community spirit of our troops, regardless of circumstances. MSgt. Capinas will be coming home the end of January and I’m looking forward to meeting him and personally thank him.
2008 Baldy Bash Sponsors

Nevada PEP offers a very special and heartfelt thank you to our sponsors, without whom this event would not be possible. By providing opportunities to those who work to better the lives of children with special needs, you are not only honoring our community’s heroes and first responders, but also supporting the fundraising that provides much needed services. We salute you and truly value the lasting partnerships we have formed. We extend our most sincere appreciation and recognition for the support you have given to the Baldy Bash event, and are proud to endorse your contributions as evidence of your amazing community spirit. Thank you!

Corporate Sponsors

HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO
SAVE THE PLANET
LAS VEGAS FIRE & RESCUE
NEVADA STATE BANK
SHERIFF’S PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Individual Sponsors

Andrew Leavitt, Esq.
Dennis M. Leavitt, Esq.
Jim Leavitt, Esq.
Kermitt L. Waters, Esq.
Andres G. Resto, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Dr. & Mrs. Ivan Goldsmith & Trim Care Staff

Raffle Sponsors

Academy of Hair Design
Albertsons
Stores #6090 & 6048 and E. Charleston & Sloan
Angel Park Golf Club
Anthony & Mario’s Broadway Pizzeria
Applebee’s:
locations #6010 and #6005
Badlands Golf Club
Baja Fresh
Balloons with a Twist
Bass Pro Outdoor World
Bertolini’s
Bike World
BOA Steakhouse
Bodywork by Sarah
Bonnie Springs Ranch
Brenden Theaters
Buddies Exterminating, LLC
Cactus Joe’s
Callaway
Carl’s Jr.
Cheesecake Factory:
locations@ Caesars Palace & Henderson
Chili’s
Claim Jumper
Costco
Courtyard Deli
Dept. of Forestry (Smokey the Bear)
El Pollo Loco
Eldorado Canyon Mine Tours
English Garden Florist
Fabulous Freddy’s
Fancy Clancy Catering
Game Works (Sonic the Hedgehog)
Golden Gate Hotel & Casino
Golden Spoon
Hands on Therapeutic Massage & Spa
Happy Face Events
Honeybaked Ham
J.C. Penney’s Salon
Johnny Rockets
La-Z-Boy Furniture
Lake Mead Cruises
Lakes Cleaners
Las Vegas Motor Speedway
Looney 4 Balloons
Lowes
Mad Science
Mimi’s Café #89
Mr. Lucky’s @ The Hard Rock
Nevada Chicken Café
Nothing Bundt Cake
(provided by Donna Zamora)
Olive Garden
Panda Express
Phil Maloof
Pink Taco @ The Hard Rock
Potato Valley Café
Wild Truffles Catering
Wrangler Hockey Package
(provided by Kathy Treants)
Quiznos Subs
Red Lobster
Red Robin
Roni Josef Salon & Spa
Sammy’s Pizza
See’s Candy
Strike Zone Bowling Center
Sunflower Florist
Sweet Tomatoes
Team Martin Tae Kwon Do
T.G.I. Friday’s
Tobin James Winery
Trader Joe’s
UNLV Runnin’ Rebels
Vons
Children’s Art Show and Silent Auction

The 3rd Annual Children’s Art Show/Silent Auction was held on October 21, 2008 at the beautiful and historical Lake’s Mansion in Reno, Nevada. Guests of the event were able to enjoy refreshments, music and networking while viewing the priceless Children’s Art and participating in the Silent Auction. The Lake’s Mansion staff also conducted complimentary tours of the mansion to attendees. Nevada PEP honored Frankie McCabe, Nevada Department of Education Director of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education and School. For over 23 years, Ms. McCabe has been a leader in Nevada as an advocate and educator for the education of children with special needs. Because of her passion and dedication, countless children have reached their dreams.

The Children’s Art Show was a huge success and we would like to thank the children who donated their masterpieces, volunteers and the community who donated silent auction items! The Silent Auction Donors were:

24 Hour Fitness
Adele’s Restaurant and Lounge
Anchor Auction
Art Source
Atlantis Hotel and Casino
Austin Mountain Country Food and Spirits
Avon by Barbara Hermesky
Bill Cunningham
Body Wisdom
Boreal
Carson Valley Inn
Claim Jumper
COSTCO
Dan Hellman
Diamond Peak
Diane Crawford
Elements Spa
Ever After Creations
Fleischmann Planetarium and Science Center
Forever Yours
Gold Dust West
GymBoree Play and Music
Harrah’s Hotel and Casino
Heidi’s Family Restaurant
Hot August Nights
Jump Man Jump
Jump N Play
Katie Pace
Kohl’s
Lake’s Mansion
Mary Kay by Jessica Cole
Moana Nursery
Montbleu Resort Casino and Spa Mt. Rose Ski Resort
Outback Steakhouse
Pam Becker
Pump it Up Inflatable Party Zone
Raley’s
Rapscaillion Seafood House and Bar
Safeway
Sam’s Club
Sand Regency
Scolari’s
Sierra Arts
Southwest Airlines
Sparks Florist
Taqueria La Michoacana
Target
Teaque West
Tessera Glass
The Green Onion
The Peppermill Hotel and Casino
The Resort@ Red Hawk
Trader Joes
Trish Leavitt
Very Special Arts
Walley’s HotSprings
Western Village
Wild Island
Wolf Run Golf Club
Zen Skincare by Jill
24 Hour Fitness
Friend

I would like to thank the staff and management at 24 Hour Fitness for supporting my son in his efforts to become fit and healthy. Due to side effects from medication, my son gained 60 pounds and was suffering from health problems caused by obesity. Initially, I thought it was going to be difficult for him to get into shape, but the staff at 24 Hour Fitness make going to the gym fun and rewarding for him. My son is greeted when he enters the gym with a friendly smile, encouragement and “high 5’s” since becoming a member in November 2007. My son is shedding those extra pounds, getting stronger and feeling good about himself.

Thanks,
Dee Raymond

Dr. Howard Baron
Professional

Yes! We have good doctors in Las Vegas. Dr. Baron is a pediatric GI, who made my son very comfortable in his office. I watched with great delight as he interacted with my son. He was able to check his heart and lungs and made him giggle when he pressed on his tummy. He has the perfect personality! He is patient and kind, yet professional and confident. It was one great feeling to watch my young man with autism look him in the eye and shake his hand like a perfect gentleman as we were leaving.

Thanks for being a doctor!
Diane Lombardo
Parent

Beverly Burnett
Occupational Therapist

Henry Adams once said “A teacher affects eternity; you can never tell where their influence stops.” Beverly Burnett truly is a teacher who has changed not only our son’s life, but ours as well. When our toddler was 18 months old, we brought him to Beverly for an evaluation. He was unresponsive to his name and was not speaking or understanding words. After six months of treatment our son loves to talk and he also loves people! We are so thankful to Beverly for bringing our little boy’s “sparkle” back. We will always be grateful to her for her patience, dedication, and encouragement. She truly is amazing.

Sara Chown
Parent

Beverly Burnett
Occupational Therapist

When the diagnoses of Aspergers shook our world, Beverly Burnett was the one who showed us the way forward.

All great gifts come with more complicated instructions. Beverly has the ability to think outside the box, so important when our kids are so uncomfortable inside that box. Beverly is available at all times, on and off the clock. She can’t wait to share and learn more in this rapidly growing science of mind and body.

Scott Linker
Parent

These warm and heartfelt stories are the community’s response to those who have gone above and beyond to serve families of children with disabilities. We hope you are inspired by the stories of committed Nevadans who are truly making a difference.
Pam Becker
Advocate

Pam is the chair of the Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium. She has worked tirelessly for the needs of children and families for well over two decades. Her energy and tenacity has been the driving force in moving Washoe County towards implementing System of Care principles. Her efforts have improved the lives of hundreds of kids.

Diane Thorkildson
Parent

Valerie Fisher
Role model

I have known Valerie for three years. When a child is in need Valerie puts aside her own problems and makes sure that child is taken care of. Valerie has told all of her friends with children that if they need anything to ask her. Valerie has become a role model and loved by my son who has a learning disability. My son loves her like his own aunt. Everywhere Valerie goes children love her. Valerie has clearly shown her love and support for our communities’ children. Thank you, Valerie.

With much love,
Joy Horan

Kat Fuentes
Physical Therapist

Kat has provided physical therapy for my daughter at Children’s Therapy Center for over a year now. Despite my daughter’s many disabilities, including a trach, Kat has never been afraid to push my daughter to her full potential. We are grateful to Kat for taking such a special interest in our daughter and plan to continue seeing her until my daughter no longer needs physical therapy.

Bryce & Erika Loveland
Parents

Laurie Gold
Teacher

Laurie Gold was one of our original outstanding “Pathways” teachers. Laurie’s dedication to all her students was evident. She was the first to offer support for any needed intervention to help a child. Laurie is currently a teacher at Turning Point in the W.C.S.D. The district is about to lose a most valuable teacher as Laurie is retiring soon. She should be honored as a shining star and a ray of light for her students. She is truly one of the best!

Terri Peltier & Rod Smith

Kathy Hughes
Family Specialist

I have been working with my family specialist for about 4 years now, due to my son’s behaviors in school. When I found Nevada PEP’s support and encouragement, I no longer stood alone. There were many days that I felt alone and was not sure of what to do. I was always able to contact my family specialist and ask for her encouragement and support. She was there to support me through IEP meetings and to help me in addressing my children’s behavior. I have two teenagers who are both diagnosed with S.E.D.; my youngest child is in a treatment facility learning how to handle his feelings. My older son is in the process of finding his path into his future. I am proud of both my children and the path to success that the both of them are taking. I love my children very much and I support and want what is best for them. I could not have done this alone and I want to thank Kathy Hughes very much for all of her warm words of encouragement and the support she gives to me every day.

Susan Toppa
Parent
Kelli Hughes
Special Ed. Teacher

Mrs. Kelli Hughes is a most caring, honest, and talented teacher. Her understanding of how a child’s mind works has helped us far beyond the year she taught us. Mrs. Hughes replaced parental frustration with fun tools for learning. Her depth of understanding and generosity helped us as much as our loved one. More than two grateful parents, we wish you could talk to any of Mrs. Hughes past students. A picture of Kelli Hughes should be next to the word teacher in Webster’s Dictionary. She is now a special ed. teacher, where the very best go.

Scott and Ariel
Linker
Parents

Mack Nez Johnson Jr.
MouthStick Artist

It is with respect that I honor Mack Nez Johnson as a recipient for the Nevada PEP “Hand in Hand” award. Mack is of Shoshone/Navajo decent, born and raised here in Reno. In 1983, he was in a car accident. In this accident the car he was in flew off a 300 ft. cliff. The accident left Mack paralyzed from the shoulders down.

Before the accident, art had been a big part of Mack’s life. At this point of his life, it seemed to be all over. Mack couldn’t even sit very long in his wheelchair, life as it was then was very hard. One of the most devastating things in his life was not being able to continue painting. At first he couldn’t even scribble, but every day Mack would get up and try to draw. Mack never gave up and was determined to paint again. In 1987, Mack was invited to Germany for an art exchange program.

In 1999 Mack went back to school and received his GED then continued his education attending Truckee Meadows Community College and received his AA in Graphic Communication. Mack is now attending the University of Nevada working towards his BA in Fine Arts. Mack has served his community through his participation on several state committees such as: The Governor’s Council on Developmental Disability, Disability Awareness Coalition and The American Indian Disability Assistance Center.

Today Mack is loving and living life to the fullest. He is a grandpa, a great father, a super brother and an awesome uncle, even more important a loving son.

Mack is a great example of never giving up on your dreams. He is a well known local artist who shares his talent and gift with many. Mr. Mack Nez Johnson Jr. is an inspiration to everyone he meets. I would like to thank him on behalf of the children and families of Nevada PEP.

Retta Dermody
Nevada PEP

Debbie Kelly
Teacher

Debbie Kelly is my daughter’s teacher and her Girl Scout leader. She has gone out of her way so many times to find ways to include my daughter in so many school events and activities. She has modeled for the students how to include children like my daughter who learn differently. We will always be grateful for Ms. Debbie’s patience and understanding and her way of looking at each child’s “ability”. Thank you for the many lessons learned and the creative ways that allowed my daughter to participate in physical education and Girl Scout activities. Thank you for your endless energy and the ability to teach with such enthusiasm!

Robin Kincaid
Parent
William Kunz  
Dad  

My son and I would like to nominate a very special person in our lives. He is a special gift from God, we are so lucky to have him, he is my former husband. He has been there for my son from birth and to this day he has raised, supported, and bonded with him. He is the best dad that my son could ever have. My son admires, looks up to, and loves him unconditionally. They have a special bond together; it’s a love that will never go away. I am very happy with that, it makes our lives feel very secure with a lot of love and care. He is the best. We love him with all our heart and soul.  

Deborah and Robert Kunz  
Parent & Son  

---

Barbara Leach  
Professional  

Barbara is my son’s school bus driver. She goes beyond her duties as a bus driver in insuring my son’s safety and other students’ safety while on the bus. My son has sensory integration problems that may pose a risk to his tolerance. She also communicates her concerns with his parents and takes the time to make sure her students are safe while on the bus.  

Thanks Barbara!  
Dee Raymond  
Parent  

---

Dr. Carlos Letelier  
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon  

I would like to nominate Dr. Carlos Letelier for a Hand in Hand Together We Can award. During my husband’s recent stay at Sunrise Hospital, I was amazed to see one of his surgeons, Dr. Letelier, walking the halls of the hospital all hours of the day and night looking exhausted and yet still always smiling and taking a moment to say hello in passing. I often wondered how he kept up the pace with one surgery after the next, many lasting well over 8 hours. At Dr. Letelier’s office for our first follow up appointment my husband and I were not surprised to find in the waiting room an album full of thank you letters from Dr. Letelier’s patients. What was surprising was all the letters from the children whose lives Dr. Letelier has touched through his volunteer work and community activities. How a surgeon, who works long hours at a hospital and personally cares for his patients at his office, has time to visit elementary schools, give physcials to youth so they can go to camp and organize an Easter basket collection for children is beyond me, but definitely deserves acknowledgment and a huge THANK YOU!  

Natalie Filipic  
Nevada PEP  

---

Carol Lommen  
Teacher  

For many of us our high school years are some of the most momentous and joyous times in our lives; my experience was no exception. Up until eighth grade, I attended Variety School. Then I decided to embark upon a new journey mainstreaming into a so-called “regular school”. I was excited, but also a little nervous because I am disabled and use a wheelchair. The person who helped put all those fears aside was Ms. Lommen, my theatre teacher. Ms. Lommen gave me opportunities to act in various dramatic pieces, resulting in winning competitions against other high schools. She encouraged me to try other things such as going on my senior trip. A couple of months ago, we ran into each other, the first time since my graduation. She told me she had retired, but recently returned to the work she has always loved. Carol, you were one of my favorite teachers. I want you to know you made a huge impression on me and my life, and I am grateful that our paths have crossed again. Thanks Carol!  

Robin Renshaw  
Nevada PEP
Miriam Lorenzo

Ms. Lorenzo joined the SIP classroom mid-year. She became a valuable member of our IEP team. It is not unusual to find her at the school well past 8 p.m. to understand each of her student’s disabilities. She has continually kept the lines of communication open, not only with professionals in the district, but with parents as well as service providers. She has implemented a positive behavioral plan with non-contingent re-enforcers and no negative consequences, only natural consequences that have made it possible for my son to achieve great successes in the academic and social arena.

Cheri Day
Parent

The support that he has at school is awesome. Shirley is always available to meet with our family and to help out by coming to meetings for input and to help with changes. I’m very happy that Shirley is in our life.

Thank You,
Connie Jaeger
Parent

Deanna Macaluso
Nevada PEP

Deanna, we just wanted to thank you very much for all you did for our family. You are a very kind and compassionate person. I am not sure if you even realize what an impact you made on us. I believe you are a Godsend. Again, thank you so very much.

Thank You,
Twila Sackstein
& family
Parent

Frankie McCabe
Director of Special Education
Nevada Department of Education

It is with respect that I honor Frankie McCabe as a recipient for the Nevada PEP “Hand In Hand” appreciation award for all she has done to support parent and student involvement, information and training activities throughout Nevada. Frankie McCabe was born and raised in Susanville, California. After graduating from high school Frankie attended Lassen Community College where she received her Associate of Arts degree. She then attended Chico State University receiving her BA degree in Art. Frankie has received her Masters Degree in Special Education and Administrative Certificate from the University of Nevada, Reno where she is currently working on her doctorate degree. Most importantly, Frankie is the proud mom of two sons and even prouder grandmother of a beautiful little girl. In her spare time Frankie loves to work on her hobby creating beautiful pottery. For over 23 years, Frankie McCabe has dedicated her career to the children of Nevada. Frankie has been a substitute teacher, regular education teacher, and a special education teacher in Washoe County for both the private and the public school setting. Not only has Frankie been a classroom teacher she has been Director of Special Services and Programs in Douglas County and is now the Director of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs, for the Nevada Department of Education.

Shirley Luke
Therapist

Shirley has worked with my son since 1st grade. With a lot of work he has made it through some rough times and has made some very difficult changes. Over the years my son stopped running away, he feels better about himself and his surroundings, he feels safe now.
I have had the opportunity to work with Frankie for the past 10 years. She is a true leader and a team player, always willing to listen to others and never running away from a challenge. Frankie has been a leader in the state as an advocate and educator for the education of children with special needs. Because of Frankie’s passion and dedication countless children have reached their dreams.

_Retta Dermody_
_Director of Programs and Services_  
_Nevada PEP_

_Jody O’Brien_
_Nevis_

I can’t say enough about all the great people at Nevada Early Intervention. However, one particular person means so much to me and my family. Jody O’Brien has been our angel. She has seen our family at our best and our worst and has been such a support to my two boys with Autism. Her impact on our family and on my sons’ lives has been remarkable. She gives us hope and has given me the courage to be a strong willed mom. Thank you Jody for all you do, I am so grateful for having you in our lives.

_Mandi Hetherington_  
_Parent_

---

**Shauna Reese**  
**Teacher**

We moved to Las Vegas after having to put our career in South America on hold because of the special needs of our daughter. Before moving, I spent many hours on the internet looking at the accountability reports of each elementary school in CCSD, and also the “Hand in Hand” column of recent PEP newsletters to help us decide on the school that would best meet my daughter’s needs. The end result was Charlotte Hill E.S. After my daughter was registered I spoke with the principal and told her about our situation. She listened very attentively and assured me that my daughter would receive the best attention possible. A couple of days later she called me and said that she wanted to place her in the classroom with Shauna Reese. Miss Reese had been teaching at Charlotte Hill for nine years and had an excellent reputation for helping those with special needs reach their potential. We found that to be very true. She spent much time above and beyond the call of duty by evaluating my daughter and patiently trying different methods of intervention in order to best meet her needs. She thrived under the caring and diligent attention that she was given. Miss Reese advocated for my daughter many times until she received the necessary resources. She was a wonderful encourager to me and worked well with others to contribute to the IEP process. She also prepared my daughter well for going into middle school this year. By the end of the school year my daughter was comfortable with her peers and with herself and anticipated the transition to middle school without fear and anxiety. I attribute the success she has had in sixth grade to Miss Reese especially, but also to the professional staff at Charlotte Hill Elementary School and at Schofield Middle School.

Thank you Shauna,

_Cynthia Martin_  
_Parent_

---

**Sally Reeves**  
**Advocate**  
_Nevada PEP_

We were blessed to be helped by NV PEP’s Sally Reeves. How to believe that in five days she would process our paperwork, meet our daughter and take me from combatant to part of a winning team for our little lady. By empowering us with more knowledge, we had the ability and confidence to know how to listen and ask. Her generosity of spirit created a paradigm shift in the room. Before Sally Reeves, and co-angels, we didn’t have the skills to help our own angel. This is why we insist on nominating one of our own.

Scott and Ariel  
_Linker_  
_Parents_
I would like to give a big thank you to the Roadhouse Riders. They took a last minute tip and really came through. How they did all of that for my son was amazing! Thanks to the Roadhouse Riders my son had a wonderful birthday with more presents than he could have imagined. Everything was just perfect! I know that the Roadhouse Riders always rise to the occasion to make each child feel important and very much loved.

Thank you so much for your generosity on my son’s special day.

Kathleen Nepolitan
Parent

I want to recognize and give a hand to my son’s TOR and Resource Teacher, Cindy Rotolo at Escobedo Middle School. Cindy keeps us informed of all of our son’s academic progress or issues, and goes the extra mile to help ensure my son does not fall through the cracks. She, and the other wonderful staff at Escobedo, has been patient and helpful to my young man with Aspergers who thinks and learns outside of the box.

Susan Packard
Parent
Teacher

I would like to recognize Wilma with a special Hand In Hand award. She has been working with my daughter all summer. Wilma goes above and beyond her call of duties with all the children in her care. This was the first time my daughter has had this type of intervention. I had my concerns and was apprehensive on how my daughter would do in this program, if her needs would be addressed, and if she would have the appropriate facilitation with the other children in order for her to gain socially and make some new friends. Right from the start my daughter was telling me how much fun she was having and I could tell that she enjoyed going on the daily adventures with Wilma and her friends. Wilma is positive with her interventions and you can tell that she enjoys working with your child. On several occasions she has told me how much SHE has learned from my child. That really makes a parent feel good! Thank you Wilma for the wonderful summer, you helped my daughter grow and we appreciate you.

Love,
Rebecca McCollom
Parent

Linda Safford has taught Special Education-Early Childhood to young adult-for 15 years in Pershing County.
She helps students succeed. Her students’ parents call her the “Miracle Worker” because she has helped students whom all others have given up on to not only achieve, but to graduate and transition into colleges, and vocational jobs. She accomplished this by meeting each student, assessing their needs and teaching directly to those with a firm hand, a gentle compassion, and a love for learning.

I am thankful that she is my colleague and my mildly mentally handicapped child’s advocate and dedicated teacher.

Thank You,
Lee Ann Gallagher
Parent

How do you say in 100 words how a person can affect you and your child so much? Connie came to us from another school system last year during a difficult time in our lives. We were still adjusting to our move to Winnemucca and trying to get the necessary services for our son to help him succeed in school and at home. I remember the first meeting

Connie Stillwell
Special Ed. Teacher

I am thankful that she is my colleague and my mildly mentally handicapped child’s advocate and dedicated teacher.

Thank You,
Lee Ann Gallagher
Parent

Wilma Simon
Basic Skills Worker

How do you say in 100 words how a person can affect you and your child so much? Connie came to us from another school system last year during a difficult time in our lives. We were still adjusting to our move to Winnemucca and trying to get the necessary services for our son to help him succeed in school and at home. I remember the first meeting
with her, she was so helpful and understanding I didn’t quite know how to take it. I had been used to doing so much on my own that for someone to say, “I can help you with that”, was such a blessing. I can’t describe to you how it felt in mere words. With Connie’s training, years of experience, compassion and abounding energy her “KIDS” are her main priority and it shows in her work with them. She is driven to help them succeed in the home and in the community. She is one in a million and I am so glad she works with my son! I just wanted to acknowledge her for all her hard work.

Kim Howell  
Parent

Carolyn Wassell  
Teacher

Carolyn Wassell is a great example of a teacher who is committed to all of her students. Her loving and kind manner has created a rich learning environment for my daughter. We will always be grateful for her ability to include my daughter and create opportunities for her to learn and gain confidence. Thank you, Mrs. Wassell for your dedication to your students and their families. All of your students have benefited by your practice that students learn from each other regardless of their level or abilities. This inclusive thinking is a model for all schools and the community.

Robin Kincaid  
Parent

Jerry Whitehead ES  
Staff

It’s very hard just to recognize one certain staff member at Jerry Whitehead; those included are Gloria Gazaway, Holly Anderson, Melissa Heapy, Kathleen Hoff and Nancy Maldonado. My son has ADHD and a hearing problem and wears hearing aides. He struggled very hard to overcome boundaries. My son and I moved and we met this great group of people, now my son is coming along and doing well. His behavior and attitude has changed. The team has worked hard with meetings and informed me of all issues that concern my child. Still he struggles a little with reading but if we work together as a team he will progress well. Everyone is a team player and teamwork is what all schools need with positive re-direction. I want to thank you all for your efforts.

Thank you,  
Regina Terrell  
Parent
Worthwhile projects such as the “Hand In Hand, Together We Can” program would not be possible without the charitable support Nevada PEP receives from generous persons and businesses throughout the state of Nevada. Thanks to grants, donations, and contributions of everyone’s time and effort, Nevada PEP has been able to celebrate its sixteen-year anniversary of providing support and education to parents and professionals in Nevada. In partnership with the thoughtful donors listed below, the Hand In Hand program was created, developed and continues to grow. Nevada PEP is proud to acknowledge the following businesses as active contributors in enriching the lives of children with disabilities.

Platinum Sponsor

Carlson & Associates

Helping Any Way We Can

www.carlsoninc.biz
Thank you for your generous support. We commend your commitment to children with special needs.

Platinum Sponsor

Gold Sponsors

STORE # 3254

Your support for children with special needs is heartfelt.

STORE # 3473

We appreciate your true commitment.
Gold Sponsors

Walmart

STORE # 3277

Your true dedication to supporting families is appreciated.

Willow Springs Outpatient Services

Thank you for your community support.

Sponsors
A special thank you to our Silver “Hand in Hand” Sponsors!

Julie Beasley, Ph.D.  
Karen Eisenberg  
Frontier Financial Credit Union  
Denise Kline  
Kestra Kuretich  
Dawn LaBonte  
Robin & John Lamb  
Trish Leavitt  
Sam Lieberman  
Juanita Matz  
Linda Newport  
Terri Peltier  
Patricia Peterman  
Pamela Powers  
Craig Wetzel
A very special thanks to everyone who participated in the “Hand in Hand Together We Can” Appreciation Program!

Please send in a nomination to:
Nevada PEP,
2355 Red Rock Street,
Ste. 106
Las Vegas, Nevada, 89146.

You may fax your stories to 702.388.2966 or email them to: pepinfo@nvpep.org.

Please limit your entries to THREE nominees per family per year, and ONE nominee per form.

Thank you to all the extraordinary and devoted people throughout the state of Nevada who have given that extra hand to help our children.
Annual Sponsorship
Hand in Hand Appreciation Program

Show your support for the special people across the state who make the lives of children with special needs better by becoming a sponsor of the Hand in Hand Appreciation Program. Help us to recognize, honor and publicly applaud those who partner with parents and make a difference for children with special needs.

Silver Sponsorship  $100 up to $1,000
- Recognized in the Yearbook
- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin

Gold Sponsorship  $1,000 up to $3,000
- Business Card Size Recognition in the Yearbook
- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin
- Hand in Hand Sponsorship Plaque

Platinum Sponsorship  $3,000 and up
- Half Page Recognition in the Yearbook
- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin
- Hand in Hand Sponsorship Plaque
- Honorable Mention in “Hand in Hand“ Literature

October is Nevada’s Month recognizing children with special needs. In honor of this annual recognition Nevada PEP will produce the “Hand in Hand” yearbook each October. Honorees will also be highlighted in the quarterly PEP Post throughout the year.