

Insight

Fall 2018

Developments at The New England Center for Children®

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PRODUCTS OF
THE NEW ENGLAND
CENTER FOR CHILDREN



The New England Center
for Children®
Autism Education and Research

Insight

Fall 2018

Vol. 2, No. 2

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Our Mission: To transform the lives of children with autism worldwide through education, research, and technology.

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Please send comments or suggestions to development@necc.org.

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A LETTER FROM OUR CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Dear friend,

The CDC updated their statistics on autism spectrum disorder (ASD) this year, putting the current rate at 1 in 59 children across the United States. While improved diagnostic criteria and access to healthcare contributes to the higher incidence, the need for services has never been more apparent. Your understanding of this need is paramount as we look toward a future where every child with autism receives the services he or she needs.

Through NECC's combination of education, treatment, research and technology development, we are making significant strides in our mission to help even more children and families with autism. This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of our Partner Program Classroom service, an innovative program that provides NECC services within a child's home school district, including in 50 public school classrooms in New England. Meanwhile, Senior Program Director Becky MacDonald is replicating a study on early autism diagnosis, seeing symptoms in babies as young as 6 weeks.

During the past year, NECC was featured in notable publications, including the *The Boston Globe* and *The New York Times*. Our reach continues to attract interest and investment from corporations, foundations and individuals, and your support continues to expand, too. Thanks to you, we achieved \$1.9M in fundraising dollars in fiscal year 2018. The Parent Match Challenge resulted in \$557,265 from NECC parents, our fundraising events met or exceeded goals, and 10 foundations provided support for our programs.

With philanthropic support, we can continue to do what we do best — help children with autism gain the life and academic skills they need to be as independent as possible.

Jared Bouzan
Chief Development Officer

IN MEMORIAM: MARVIN N. "MICKEY" GELLER, ESQ.



Mickey was a founding member of the NECC Board of Directors, joining in the late 1970s when his daughter began receiving NECC services. He was an ardent supporter of the program, and often noted that NECC made his family's challenges with autism manageable.

He attended Harvard Law School and worked for 50 years as an attorney. He was a proud advocate for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. After retiring from law practice he volunteered as a 5th grade teacher at the Baker School in Chestnut Hill, MA, and was involved in Camp Jabberwocky on Martha's Vineyard, a camp for children with disabilities. Mickey co-chaired the Advisory Committee of Gateway Arts, a Brookline art institution of artists with disabilities. He also conceived and helped establish the Carol Dimaiti Stuart Foundation, which provides scholarship assistance to young people from Boston's Mission Hill area and funds activities aimed at ending racism and violence in the city.

Mr. Geller passed away on April 13, 2018, at age 91. He is deeply missed by the NECC community.

On the cover: Kristian, age 15, enjoys a sunny afternoon at Franklin Park Zoo in Boston. Field trips and community outings are made possible thanks to your gift to the Annual Fund.

» Philanthropy

This year, NECC received 10 grants to supplement the Annual Fund, helping to create additional opportunities for music instruction, gardening, vocational training, and adapted physical education.



The Laurence W. Levine Foundation, Inc.



Constance O. Putnam Foundation

Robot



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The VIYU Foundation

» 1975 Legacy Society

YOUR *philanthropy*
YOUR *impact*
YOUR *legacy*

The 1975 Legacy Society is our planned giving program to recognize donors today for a future gift made through their estate plans. These gifts provide essential philanthropic support that will ensure future impact on families with autism. Charitable bequests or estate planning gifts to NECC will promote cutting edge autism treatment and encourage publication of our research for years to come.

To learn more about the 1975 Legacy Society, contact Joe Ziska, Director of Development at jziska@necc.org.



Program Updates

EDUCATION

Partner Program celebrates 20 years

The first NECC Partner Program classroom opened in 1998 when a school district in Central Massachusetts requested NECC open a classroom to serve students who needed more intensive instruction than the school could provide. Partner Program classrooms provide an NECC classroom experience on-site within a school, and include a full-time NECC teacher, weekly supervision by a board certified behavior analyst, and the ACE® application. Since 1998, Partner Program classrooms have served more than 560 students in 32 school districts across five states, with remarkable success.

Your giving supports Partner Program classrooms by providing adapted technology, teacher support, and student reinforcers.

94%
of Partner Program students' IEP objectives are met or show progress

93%
of Partner Program students participate in inclusion within their school

85%
of students moved to a less restrictive setting upon leaving a Partner Program classroom



Partner Program classroom teachers at an NECC staff training day.

RESEARCH

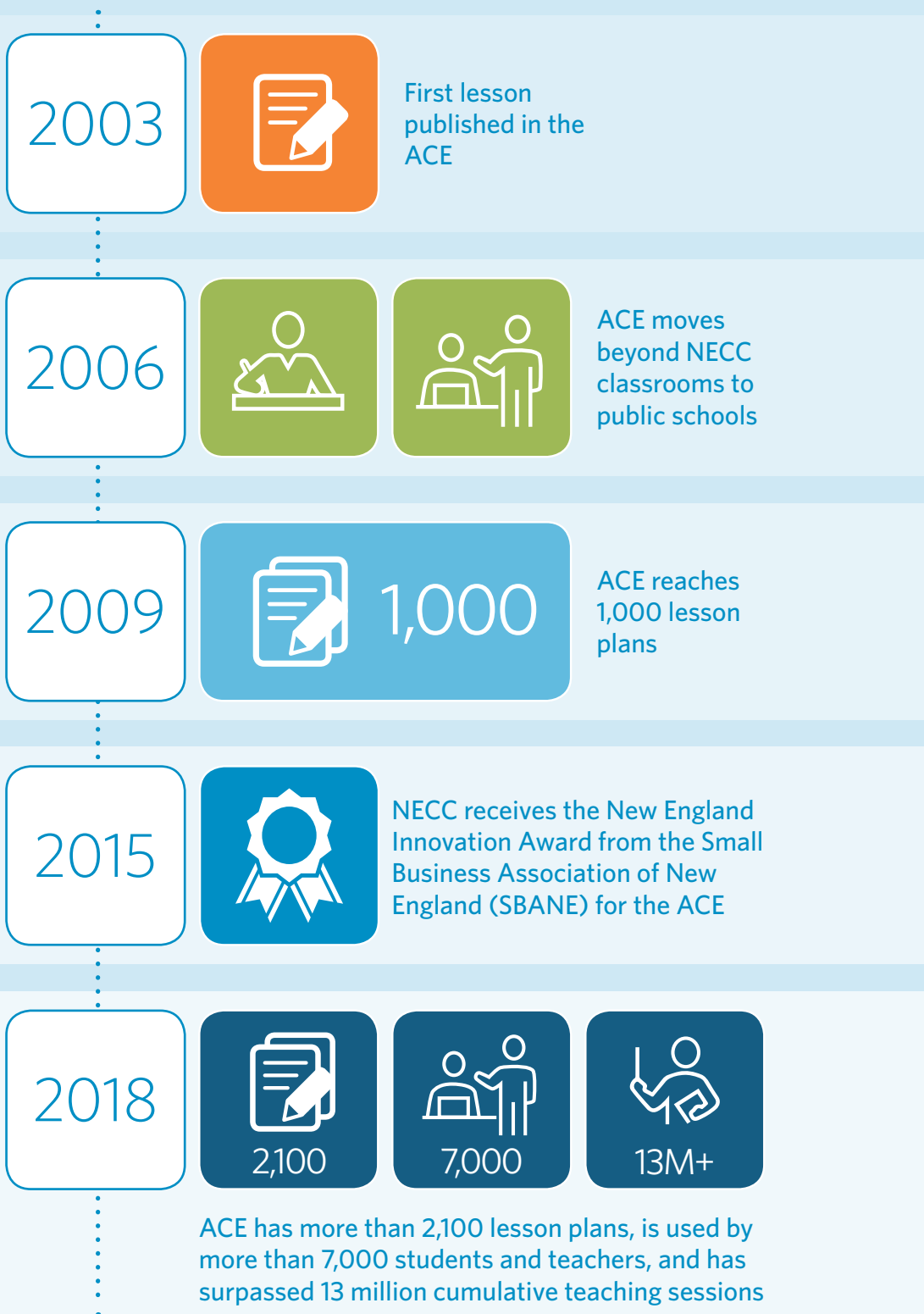
Identifying symptoms of autism in babies

Researchers have found that infant siblings of children with autism can show symptoms of ASD before their first birthday. Senior Program Director Dr. Rebecca MacDonald is replicating a remarkable study by Graupner and Sallows (2017) of the Wisconsin Early Autism Project on early identification of autism. Recent data from the study suggests that symptoms — such as fleeting attention and lack of smiling, reciprocal cooing and babbling — can emerge as early as the first two months of life. In the Wisconsin Study, 14 babies were identified as symptomatic and received 15 to 40 hours of 1:1 intensive behavioral intervention. Of the 14 who showed symptoms of ASD prior to age 6 months, 13 showed no symptoms by 24 months after treatment. The goal of early identification of autism and early intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI) is to prevent the full onset of ASD as a toddler develops. Dr. MacDonald's research is funded by grants and the NECC Annual Fund.



ACE reaches new milestone in teaching skills

Developed here at NECC the Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia,® or ACE® ABA Software System, is the leading educational software for learners with autism. Used in NECC classrooms, public schools, and agencies, ACE helps teachers assess, teach, and evaluate student progress using content developed through NECC's ongoing research in educational best practices. To date, the ACE has surpassed more than 13 million cumulative teaching sessions, and over 385,000 targets have been mastered by students.



In the News

WBZ4 CBS Boston

Executive Director, Cathy Welch, talked to 4 Your Community about the work NECC does locally and around the world.

Comcast Newsmakers

Chief Development Officer, Jared Bouzan, spoke with Jenny Johnson about the programs and services NECC provides and the impact on children with autism and their families.

The Boston Globe

NECC student Connor Biscan was profiled in a feature story, which also highlighted Connor's education at NECC.

WCVB News Boston

Boston's Channel 5 News featured NECC on their Wake Up Call.

The New York Times

The Vocations column featured an interview with adult resident, Jeanine, about her work at Sun Life Financial.



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Trending NECC hashtags

- #NECCforAutism
- #TeamNECC
- #WorkatNECC
- #NECC5K

Acts of Generosity

» The McKenna Family

The McKenna family hadn't had a full night's sleep in five years. Their middle child, Michael, didn't talk or play, constantly bolted, cried nonstop, and never slept through the night. The family didn't go out in public or have friends over, and their other children, a baby and a preschooler, were not getting the attention they needed.

The McKenna family knew something was wrong, but Michael's pediatrician told them *he's delayed, he's a boy, don't worry about it.* "We watched his baby brother meet milestones and surpass him," says Michael's mother, Lori. "It was bittersweet seeing him develop when Michael wasn't doing anything."

They pushed for answers and, when Michael was diagnosed with autism at 18 months, Lori quit her job to manage early intervention sessions, therapies, and doctor appointments. But the early intervention therapists quit, one after another, because Michael was so difficult.

"It was music to our ears to hear someone say they had a plan to help our son."

—Michael McKenna

"It was such an exhausting experience," recalls Lori's husband, Mike. "I was honestly concerned I was going to lose my wife, that she was going to have a breakdown."

Michael's journey to NECC started when his town educational consultant told them that Michael required a residential placement. After absorbing the shock of potentially sending their 4-year-old to live away from them, Mike and Lori reviewed the list of recommended schools.

The day Lori brought Michael to visit NECC 12 years ago she couldn't get across the parking lot. Michael flopped around, then lay on the pavement and wouldn't move. The staff came outside immediately to assist. "I toured the school and when I finished I called Mike and said, 'I've seen the rest and now I've seen the best,'" Lori says.

"I took a tour and felt the same way," says Mike. "I loved that Vinnie Strully was so definitive in what he thought. It was music to our ears to hear someone say they had a plan to help our son. Our history had been that no one knew how to handle him. Finally, at NECC, we had someone who wasn't intimidated by him."



At age 4, Michael joined the NECC residential program. Though it was difficult for Mike and Lori to place their child in a residential setting, they knew it would be harder if he didn't get the services he needed. "We want Michael to be as independent as possible, and learn greater self-awareness. That scares me the most," says Mike, "that we aren't going to be around forever, so he needs self-awareness, to be aware of dangerous situations. And we want him to have dignity."

With the primary care of Michael in NECC's hands, Mike and Lori found a new normal at home. "I learned I didn't even know my daughter," Mike says. "I learned she was a wonderful writer, she had friends I hadn't met. And the baby — I didn't know our baby."

Now, when Michael, age 16, goes home on the weekends the family likes to hang out and watch TV or go for long car rides. At school, Michael's teachers work on his leisure skills, so he can tolerate more down time. One of his favorite leisure activities is watching city traffic videos on YouTube.

Lori is a first-grade teacher in the public school system, and Mike's business continues to thrive. He is the founder and president of Partners Benefit Group (PBG), Inc. and Comprehensive Benefit Administrators (CBA).

Mike and Lori support NECC because NECC doesn't have alumni that are able to give back to the school once they graduate, but also because they believe autism understanding is still lacking.

"I still get asked 'Is your son a savant, is he like Rain Man?'" says Mike. "It's constantly having to educate. Even if you're not directly connected to autism or the school, people will understand

this type of need if you show them — advocating and supporting and teaching a population that is the most vulnerable among us."

The family stresses there are so many ways to support NECC. Last year, Mike was on a local radio program, *Chapters*, with Jim Derick, where he shared his family's experience with autism and information on important resources including NECC.

Lori is a regular volunteer at NECC's staff and teacher appreciation nights and runs the Falmouth Road Race with their daughter, Emily, to fundraise and generate awareness. This year, their son Matt ran the race, too. "I took it on as a personal challenge a few years ago," says Lori, "knowing Michael has so many challenges I wanted to challenge myself."

Mike's biggest effort is *The Mike Golf Invitational*, named in honor of their son. "It's more than a golf tournament," says Mike, "it gives a face to autism. I started with a smaller corporate event to introduce NECC to my business circles, and it was so well received I brought the idea for the golf event to Cathy Welch (NECC's Executive Director) and she said go for it."

The Mike celebrated its 10th year on August 27 and has raised \$629,515 for NECC to date. Michael's regular trips into the community, as part of his educational plan to learn how to interact in public, means he can attend The Mike. The golfers find great joy in seeing Michael's progress year after year.

"I'm profoundly grateful to NECC," Mike says. "I can't even put into words... our marriage is intact, our family is intact, because of NECC."

2018 Event Highlights

- » **BOSTON MARATHON**
\$56,253 raised
- » **NECC 5K WALK/RUN FOR AUTISM**
\$211,000 raised
- » **ART SHOW**
\$6,505 raised
- » **CARLOS PLACIDO DUNKIN' DONUTS GOLF CLASSIC**
\$214,410 raised
- » **FALMOUTH ROAD RACE**
\$19,905 raised
- » **THE MIKE GOLF INVITATIONAL**
\$87,430 raised





The New England Center
for Children®
Autism Education and Research

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www.necc.org

Boston • Abu Dhabi

SAVE THE DATE

Children of Promise Gala

Friday, November 30, 2018
InterContinental, Boston, MA

Team NECC runs the Boston Marathon

Monday, April 15, 2019
Hopkinton, MA

NECC 5K Walk/Run for Autism

Saturday, May 11, 2019
Southborough, MA

Registration opens January 1, 2019
www.necc.org/5K

Carlos Placido Dunkin' Donuts Golf Classic

Monday, June 3, 2019
Franklin, MA

New Balance Falmouth Road Race

Sunday, August 18, 2019
Falmouth, MA

CHILDREN OF PROMISE

Gala

Friday, November 30 | 6:00 p.m.

InterContinental Hotel | Boston, MA

JOIN
US

as Billy Costa hosts the 3rd Annual Children of Promise Gala to benefit children and families with autism. NECC's biggest fundraiser of the year is set to entertain Boston's business leaders and philanthropists with interactive programming, auctions, live music, and dancing.

CONTACT *us*

FOR TICKET, SPONSORSHIP OR DONATION
INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR EVENT
WEBSITE AT WWW.NECC.ORG/GALA
OR CONTACT RDREW@NECC.ORG

