The Help Group is pleased to announce that three remarkable individuals will be honored at The Help Group’s 2009 Teddy Bear Ball. This 13th annual holiday gala celebration will be held on Monday, December 7th, 2009, at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

Brian Goldner, President and CEO of Hasbro Inc., will receive The Help Group’s Help Humanitarian Award in recognition of his far-reaching philanthropic leadership and commitment to children’s causes. Parent advocate Mary Urquhart will receive the Champion for Children Award in recognition of her heartfelt spirit of giving and volunteerism that has helped to create brighter futures for children with autism. Max Mayer, the gifted writer-director of the acclaimed motion picture “Adam,” will receive the Spirit of Hope Award for raising important public awareness and understanding through his sensitive portrayal of a young man with Asperger’s Disorder. Gala Chairs are Brian Grazer, Cheryl & Haim Saban, and Bill Urquhart.

A toy industry veteran, Brian Goldner is widely recognized for leading the evolution of Hasbro from a traditional toy and game company to a leader in world-class family entertainment. Brian is responsible for Hasbro’s business success.

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THE HELP GROUP’S NEW AUTISM CENTER CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

DEDICATED TO EDUCATION, RESEARCH, PARENT & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND OUTREACH

see story on page 5
A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

Dear Friends,

We’re delighted to share this edition of Helpline with you. During this holiday time of the year, it is especially gratifying to highlight some of the people and organizations that support our efforts to build brighter futures for the children.

Although these times have been challenging in our city, state and country, The Help Group’s family of friends have remained resolute in their commitment to our mission. With their help, we have served more than six thousand children and families this year and many others through our public awareness and outreach efforts. To open the doors of opportunity for many more children, construction is underway on our new state-of-the-art Autism Center.

As we go to print with this edition, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® is launching their “Deck the Walls” campaign in support of our children. We are looking forward to our Teddy Bear Ball on December 7th honoring three extraordinary individuals, Brian Goldner, Mary Urquhart and Max Mayer. That very next Saturday, December 12th, The Help Group will host more than 700 children in need and their families who are served by our mental health and child abuse prevention and intervention programs at the 26th annual Holiday Carnival. Just a few weeks in the life of The Help Group—made possible by the giving and caring of all of you who join us in our efforts. Thanks ever so much!

Best wishes to you and yours for a wonderful holiday season and a very Happy New Year!

Gary H. Carmona  ~  Dr. Barbara Firestone

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development and for driving its continued global growth. In 2008, he was named Marketwatch CEO of the Year. Dubbed the "transformer", he was recognized for rebranding the image of Hasbro and "transforming it beyond a toymaker to an intellectual-property-owning powerhouse." Since joining the Company in 2000, Brian has been a key force in making Hasbro one of the industry's most successful and profitable companies. By re-igniting many of its classic brands, including TRANSFORMERS, G.I. JOE, LITTLEST PET SHOP, NERF, MONOPOLY, PLAYSKOOL and MY LITTLE PONY, Hasbro has evolved from a traditional toy and game company to a leader in world-class family entertainment with its properties enjoyed in a variety of lifestyle mediums, including feature films, television, digital entertainment, publishing, consumer goods and more.

Brian's humanitarian spirit is reflected in his involvement with many philanthropic causes. With Brian at the helm, Hasbro's vibrant culture of corporate philanthropy touches the lives of millions of children around the world. The Hasbro Children's Fund supports educational programs for children at risk, and provides the basics for children in need through its Gift of Play product donations and Gift of Hope financial grants to dozens of organizations including, Hasbro Children's Hospital, Rhode Island Autism Project and Rhode Island Literacy Project. Its Project Zambi works to improve the lives of children orphaned by AIDS living in Zambia and its Playathon™ campaign encourages kids to raise funds for causes they care about. Brian serves as a board member of The Miriam Hospital, in Providence, RI, and Hole in the Wall Camps.

Mary Urquhart has been advocating and working on behalf of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders for nearly 20 years. Determined to help her son Brian, who was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder at 19 months of age, Mary left her successful career in manufacturing to give her full attention to Brian, and to accessing services that would help him reach his fullest potential. When confronted with the need for an early intervention program, Mary led the charge to create one, which benefited her son and many other children, and marked the beginning of her longstanding efforts to create hope and opportunity. This spring Brian will graduate from The Help Group’s Village Glen School.

As parents, Mary and her husband Bill speak openly and candidly about autism, and in doing so offer insight, encouragement and hope to other parents just beginning or already on the journey. They are wonderful humanitarians who are committed to making a difference in the lives of children and families in very real and meaningful ways and are committed to giving back to the community. For more than six years the Urquhart's have been a part of The Help Group family. Mary’s years of dedicated work on behalf of children with ASD and her long history of volunteerism gives true meaning to the words “champion for children”.

Max Mayer is an award-winning writer/director with a broad portfolio of theater, film and television credits. He is a Founder and Producing Director of the New York Stage and Film Company renowned for developing new works for the American theater. Over the past two decades Max has directed numerous world and New York premieres and has won Best Production and Best Director Helen Hayes Awards.

Max wrote and directed the highly acclaimed film, Adam, starring Hugh Dancy, Rose Byrne, Peter Gallagher and Amy Irving, which was released this past summer by Fox Searchlight Pictures. Originally screened at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival, Adam won the prestigious Alfred P. Sloan Award. In Adam, Max touchingly explores the universality of the challenges that we all face in developing human relationships and the heightened challenges of the title character who has Asperger’s Disorder. His portrayal of Adam has been applauded by the autism community for its honesty and sensitivity and for its important message to the public-at-large about Asperger’s Disorder.

The Teddy Bear Ball will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a cocktail reception. The dinner program and live auction will follow. A special musical performance by The Help Group Children's Choir and special friends will highlight the evening. We invite you to join us to light up the holiday season for the children!

For reservations and information please contact Stacy Ivers at 818.779.5212 or visit our website at www.thehelpgroup.org
The Help Group’s 18th Annual Keyes European Mercedes Benz Teddy Bear Golf Classic and Lockton Insurance Brokers Awards Dinner was held on Monday, April 20th at El Caballero Country Club. The Los Angeles business community scored a “hole in one” for the children of The Help Group through its participation and generosity. The Help Group presented its Help Fore Children Humanitarian Award to Jesse Sharf for his outstanding humanitarianism and heartfelt commitment to children.

Keyes European Mercedes Benz generously served as the tournament title sponsor for the 13th consecutive year and Lockton Insurance Brokers, LLC sponsored the awards dinner for the 3rd year. Golf Classic Chairs included Howard Tenenbaum, Vice President of Keyes Motors, Inc. and Judd Swarzman, CLU, both members of The Help Group Board of Directors, Chris Hoffman, Senior Managing Director, Eastdil Secured, and Charles P. Toppino, President, Five Tops, Inc. Major sponsors included, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, Dr. Nancy & Jonathan Glaser, The Zenith, Comerica Bank, Eastdil Secured, Milken Family Foundation, Charlotte Hughes, The Warranty Group – Resource Automotive and Yellow Cab.

At the awards dinner Gary H. Carmona, Chairman of the Board of The Help Group and Dr. Barbara Firestone, President and CEO of The Help Group thanked all event sponsors and donors for making the golf classic such a tremendous success. The Help Group Children’s Choir welcomed guests with a special musical performance. During the awards presentation Dr. Firestone remarked, “We are most grateful that Jesse has extended his hand of friendship to the children of The Help Group. He is a...”

continued on page 12
At its 2009 Summit opening proceedings, The Help Group presented its Champion for Children Award to California Senate President pro Tem, Darrell Steinberg (D – 6th). Dr. Firestone saluted the Senator remarking, “He is the embodiment of what it means to be a true public servant. At the core of his being is the commitment to becoming the voice for children and families, the underserved, the mentally ill, and children confronting special challenges in their lives.”

Graciously accepting the award Senator Steinberg stated, “I’ve long held an interest and a belief that disability is much less about the ‘dis’ and much more about the ‘ability.’ I join you proudly in your work and in your efforts to help change lives and to make sure that everybody, regardless of what they may not be able to do, are able to have a great life.”

Immediately following these proceedings, The Help Group hosted a special reception in honor of Senator Steinberg. Dr. Firestone highlighted Senator Steinberg’s outstanding efforts to address the health and well being of children with autism and other special needs, and spoke of his leadership in Chairing the California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism and his recent establishment of the Senate Select Committee on Autism

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“The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® is deeply committed to giving back and to supporting organizations that are making a difference in the communities they serve. The Help Group is a remarkable nonprofit with tremendous dedication to children with special needs and their families,” said Mel Elias, President & Chief Executive Officer of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®.

During this holiday season, be sure to stop by your local Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® for a fantastic cup of coffee and to support its “Deck the Walls” campaign. Our heartfelt thanks to Sunny Sassoon, Executive Chairman of the Management Board, Mel Elias and the entire Coffee Bean Team!
The Help Group launched its annual California public awareness and education campaign in recognition of National Autism Awareness Month in April 2009. The Help Group’s Learn the Early Signs of Autism brochures were made available to the public at The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®, Gelson’s Markets, Los Angeles City and County libraries, state, county and local elected official’s offices for the Los Angeles area and online in English and Spanish at www.thehelpgroup.org. In addition, for the third consecutive year, Gelson’s in-store campaign raised both awareness and funds in support of The Help Group’s autism education programs. Through a special foundation grant, copies of Autism Heroes: Portraits of Families Meeting the Challenge by Dr. Barbara Firestone are now available at all Los Angeles City and County libraries. With a message of hope and help, Dr. Firestone appeared on national television and local cable networks to highlight The Help Group and its efforts to address early identification and intervention and the importance of autism awareness.

Through the generous support of Regency Outdoor Advertising, The Help Group’s schools and autism awareness campaign are being prominently featured on billboards throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

The Help Group is proud to partner with so many wonderful organizations who share in its commitment to advancing autism awareness.

**CORPORATE COMMITMENT SPOTLIGHT**

The Help Group extends its appreciation to the following corporate partners for including autism awareness resources in their company news publications:

- STEWART TITLE
- LOCKTON, INC
- ATLANTIC EXPRESS
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- ZENITH INSURANCE COMPANY
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- KINETICA FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
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- PILATES STUDIO CITY
- TOSHIBA

**ABC7 REBROADCASTS AUTISM HEROES SPECIAL**

ABC7, the number one station in Southern California, rebroadcast its one hour special based on the highly acclaimed and award winning book, *Autism Heroes: Portraits of Families Meeting the Challenge*, by Dr. Barbara Firestone with photography by Joe Buissink. The special aired on Saturday, April 25th, and featured ABC7 anchors Michelle Tuzee, Phillip Palmer and Jovana Lara. *Autism Heroes* has been embraced by many in the autism community as a “compelling,” “honest” and “hopeful” account of the experiences of 38 families confronting the challenges of autism.

“We are most grateful to ABC7 for giving us the opportunity to share the message of *Autism Heroes* with its viewing audience,” said Dr. Firestone. In their own words parents featured in the special chart the course through the many stages of coping with autism and seeking solutions for their children. Through their candor they offer a lifeline of support, insight, encouragement and hope to other parents just beginning or already on the journey.

“ABC7 is proud to rebroadcast the Autism Heroes special as part of its commitment to promoting autism awareness in Southern California,” said Arnold J. Kleiner, President and General Manager of ABC7.

Complimentary DVDs of the ABC7 special are available online with the purchase of a book. All author royalties from sales of the book *Autism Heroes* are being donated to The Help Group in support of its autism efforts. www.autismheroes.org
It is estimated that 1 in every 150 children is affected by an autism spectrum disorder. Recently, a new study published in the American Academy of Pediatrics’ journal *Pediatrics* reported prevalence rates of 1 in every 91 children and 1 in every 58 boys.

To provide a lifeline of help, hope, and opportunity for the ever growing number of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, The Help Group is creating a state-of-the-art autism center. Currently under construction, this 30,000 square foot complex is situated on 2 1/4 acres of land and is immediately adjacent to The Help Group’s Sherman Oaks Campus. The Center will offer a broad array of programs and services to children, adolescents, and adults ages 18 months to 23 years of age. It will provide the additional facility infrastructure that will enable The Help Group to offer the most comprehensive, innovative and seamless system of ASD services available in the United States. The major components include the Intervention & Day School Center featuring comprehensive research validated approaches, the Research Training & Conference Center that will include The Help Group - UCLA Research Alliance and graduate and post-graduate professional training, internships and fellowships and extensive parent and family education, support, outreach and engagement, and the Theater & Arts Complex that will give young people the opportunity to enjoy the intrinsic and therapeutic benefits of the arts both as performers and audiences. The Autism Center will enable The Help Group to create cutting-edge new programs while augmenting existing programs using the most effective strategies for individuals with autism throughout the lifespan.

A gift to The Help Group’s Autism Center Capital Campaign will help to build brighter futures for so many. We’d be most grateful for your support. For more information about our capital campaign, its naming opportunities and giving levels, please contact us at 818.779.5212.

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Our heartfelt thanks to the following donors for their leadership and major gifts to the first phase of our Capital Campaign:

**LEADERSHIP GIFTS**
- Milken Family Foundation
- The Rose Hills Foundation
- United Health Group – California Health Care Investment Program

**MAJOR GIFTS**
- Zenith Insurance Company
- The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®
- Dr. Nancy & Jonathan Glaser
- Joy & Jerry Monkarsh
- Davidow Charitable Fund
- David & Sonia Salzman
- Jody & Howard Tenenbaum
- Ellen & Richard Sandler
- Ann & Dick Costello
The International Ballroom of the Beverly Hilton was filled with the spirit of the holiday season as more than 600 friends and supporters gathered for The Help Group’s 12th annual Teddy Bear Ball on Monday, December 8, 2008. The Help Group presented its Help Humanitarian Award to Steve Mosko, President of Sony Pictures Television in recognition of his vibrant humanitarian spirit and commitment to children with special needs.


Gary H. Carmona, Help Group Chairman, kicked off the event by congratulating this year’s honoree, saying, “Steve exemplifies what it means to live and to act with compassion for others.” Dr. Barbara Firestone, expressed The Help Group’s appreciation to all who were involved in helping to make The Teddy Bear Ball such a tremendous success. “In these challenging times, it’s great to be able to focus on what is right with the world. An evening like this gives us pause to celebrate the humanitarian spirit that is so alive and palpable this evening. Like our family of honorees, Steve possesses a deep sense of humanity. The Help Group is immensely grateful that Steve has made room on his broad shoulders for our children,” she said.

Jamie McGurk and Chris McGurk, CEO, Overture Films and Help Group Circle of Friends Board members acknowledged The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf® for its corporate commitment to The Help Group for the past seven years, and extended a special thank you to fellow Help Group Circle of Friends Board member, Mel Elias, Coffee Bean President & Chief Executive Officer. The couple acknowledged The Help Group’s three year partnership with Gelson’s Markets that raises both awareness and funds in support of its autism programs during autism awareness month.

Andrea Fiuczynski, President of Christie’s, led the live auction featuring an exclusive Audi R8 sports coupe, and premiere Staples Center suite courtesy of Keyes Motors. Fiuczynski acknowledged Howard Keyes, President of Keyes Motors and Howard Tenenbaum, Keyes Vice President and Help Group Board member, and the organization for its ongoing support of The Help Group. This year’s auction also featured the “Building for the Future” classroom naming program in support of The Help Group’s Capital expansion project. Dick Costello, Help Group Circle of Friends Board member, and Dr. Susan Berman, The Help
Group COO, introduced The Help Group’s annual “Opportunity Fund” auction established five years ago by Barbara and Sandy Grushow, President, Filmaka and Help Circle of Friends Board member. The auction, featuring Opportunity Fund teddy bears and Dr. Firestone’s highly acclaimed and award winning book, Autism Heroes: Portraits of Families Meeting the Challenge, provides money for scholarships, mentoring, college counseling, vocational training and internships, and even basic food, clothing and shelter to children and families in need served by The Help Group’s programs.

Ken Solomon, Chairman and CEO of The Tennis Channel and Help Group Circle of Friends Board Member, introduced a video retrospective featuring all of the individuals and organizations that The Help Group has honored since the inception of its awards program in 1987. Solomon saluted this distinguished group that represents more than 20 years of humanitarian spirit, compassion and commitment to The Help Group’s children, and welcomed Mosko to The Help Group’s family. With a special tribute to the honoree, Grammy® winning singer-songwriter Kenny Loggins and The Help Group Children’s Choir gave a heartwarming and spirited performance of the classic, House at Pooh Corner and in a solo act Loggins electrified the audience with Conviction of the Heart.

Longstanding friend and colleague of nearly 30 years, Arnie Kleiner, President and General Manager of ABC7 in Los Angeles was on hand to introduce and celebrate Mosko’s outstanding achievement. Together with Dr. Firestone and Carmona, Kleiner presented Mosko with the Help Humanitarian Award.

In his gracious acceptance remarks Mosko shared, “When I visited The Help Group it was fulfilling to see how passionate the teachers are and how much they care about each of the children...For all my dear friends with children with autism, just know that you’re in the best possible place you can be with your child because no one is in better hands.”

At the grand finale of this unforgettable evening of friendship and philanthropy, The Help Group’s Children’s Choir with special friend, former Temptations member Louis Price, sang Winter Wonderland to a cheering audience.
Jamie Lee Curtis, widely acclaimed as an actress, author, activist and humanitarian, was the featured guest speaker at The Help Group’s 2nd annual Teddy Bear Tea – An Affair of the Heart held at The Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills. Ms. Curtis captivated the audience with her candor, warmth, insight and humor in her remarks about her life’s experiences. She shared loving stories about her children whom she credits as being the inspiration for her series of best-selling children’s books that have sold more than 4.6 million copies.

The Teddy Bear Tea was hosted by Nadine Schiff-Rosen, and generously sponsored by Ms. Schiff-Rosen and her husband Fred Rosen. Both serve on The Help Group’s Circle of Friends Philanthropic Board. She thanked all the guests and said, “It’s so important for every child to get the help that they need, and by supporting The Help Group you can make this possible.” Tea Co-hosts, Julia Baumgartner and Teddi Cole, parents of children who attend The Help Group’s Summit View School, spoke of The Help Group’s positive impact on children and families.

In her welcoming remarks Dr. Barbara Firestone, set the tone for the afternoon, “Today we celebrate the collective commitment that we all share to help children with autism, learning disabilities and other special needs to express the unique and wonderful potential that each child possesses.” Dr. Firestone announced that The Help Group has recently broken ground on its newest campus, a state-of-the-art autism center focusing on specialized education, applied research, parent education, professional development, and outreach. see related story on page 7

The program included the remarks of Deanna Munguia, parent of a four-year-old son, Manny who attends The Help Group Young Learners Preschool for Autism. She spoke about her family’s journey since they first realized that Manny was developing differently and about the positive impact of early intervention. At the conclusion of her remarks, young members of The Help Group Children’s Choir sang When You Wish Upon a Star to a cheering audience.

At the close of the event Ms. Curtis signed her books, including the recent #1 New York Times bestseller, “Big Words for Little People”. The Teddy Bear Tea was truly an affair of the heart enjoyed by all.
Dr. Barbara Firestone was honored as 2009 Woman of the Year for the 42nd District by California Assemblymember Mike Feuer at the California State Capitol on March 16, 2009. To pay tribute to her lifetime achievements, Feuer presented Dr. Firestone with a commemorative proclamation at a special recognition ceremony.

“Dr. Firestone’s work with The Help Group has immeasurably improved the lives of so many children and families, both in Los Angeles and throughout the country,” said Feuer. “I am proud to honor her as the Assembly District 42, 2009 Woman of the Year.” Accepting the award, Dr. Firestone said, “I am honored to have been selected by Assemblymember Feuer whom I admire greatly for his leadership and commitment to the well being of the children of our State. I dedicate this award to the children of The Help Group who are at the heart of all of The Help Group’s efforts.”

The Woman of the Year event was established in 1987 in celebration of the contributions made by remarkable women throughout California. Held in March in commemoration of Women’s History Month, women from every assembly district in California are recognized as Woman of the Year in a formal ceremony on the floors of the Senate and Assembly. This yearly event is sponsored and organized by the Women’s Caucus.

THE HELP GROUP PLAYS KEY ROLE IN CALIFORNIA SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUTISM & RELATED DISORDERS

On April 28, 2009, Dr. Barbara Firestone joined a State Capitol press conference called by California Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg to announce the establishment of the Senate Select Committee on Autism (ASD) & Related Disorders. This Committee, chaired by Senator Steinberg, will build on the trailblazing work and important contributions of the three-year California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism, which was chaired by Senator Steinberg, vice-chaired by Dr. Firestone, and ended in November 2008.

According to Senator Steinberg, “This Select Committee signals California’s ongoing bipartisan commitment to individuals with autism and their families. It will provide a legislative forum for research, analysis, deliberations, and outreach on the most pressing issues and concerns facing families who are dealing with ASD.”

Dr. Firestone spoke of the importance of the Select Committee, “Under the visionary leadership of Senator Darrell Steinberg, the California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism that I had the privilege to Vice-Chair, and now the establishment of the Senate Select Committee on Autism & Related Disorders, send a strong message of California’s ongoing commitment to bringing help and hope to individuals with autism and their families,” said Dr. Firestone. “We will continue to lead the way in this arena, and The Help Group and I look forward with great anticipation to supporting the work of the Senate Select Committee on Autism.”

Senator Steinberg introduced the committee’s members and a package of autism related bills that were introduced in this past legislative session, and highlighted the Committee’s four critical focus areas: Early Identification & Treatment, Insurance Coverage by Private Health Plans, Transitional Training, Education and Employment and Issues Related to Housing for Individuals with ASD. To seek the input and participation of stakeholders in each of these areas, Regional Task Forces are being created throughout the state to establish a network of consumers, families, professionals and organizations. Dr. Firestone has been appointed Chair of the Statewide Coordinating Council of Autism Task Forces, and Chair of the North Los Angeles Autism Regional Task Force (NLAART) under the leadership of Select Committee members, Senators Carol Liu (21st), Alex Padilla (20th), and Fran Pavley (23rd). Ninety-eight members strong, the NLAART held its first meeting on October 9th and will gather again in January 2010. Currently eleven Task Forces have been established.

As part of the proceedings and in recognition of National Autism Awareness Month, Steinberg presented a Legislative Resolution to Dr. Firestone, declaring April 28, 2009, The Help Group Autism Awareness Day in California in recognition of The Help Group’s extensive autism efforts.
The Help Group gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their sponsorship of classrooms that have been named in honor of the donors or their designee:

- Julee & Danny Bramson in honor of Jesse Bramson
- Whitney & Ben Burditt
- The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®
- Viki, James & Christian Coufos
- The Firestone Family
- Samantha & Jonathan Firestone in honor of Charlotte Dylan Firestone
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- Kenin M. Spivak
- Linda & Judd Swarzman
- Anne Sweeney & Phillip H. Miller and Family
- Mary & Bill Urquhart 2 classrooms in honor of Brian Urquhart
- Miriam Zlotolow

To support our Capital Campaign, please call 818.779.5212

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The Help Group’s Teddy Bear Picnic DONORS

Our Teddy Bear Picnic that takes place each year in June is a special time when many friends philanthropically support The Help Group’s efforts. Even though our Picnic was postponed for this year, the following individuals and organizations carried on the tradition of this event with their generous gifts.

Zenith Insurance Company Anonymous

Annie Sweeney & Phillip H. Miller Administrative Services Corp
- Ruggieri Construction Inc.

Ann & Dick Costello
- Sheri & Roy Disney
- Disney Worldwide Services, Inc.
- Drs Barbara & David Firestone
- Davidow Charitable Fund
- James Newton Howard

Imagine Entertainment
- Ronnie & Michael Kassan
- Sheila & Martin Lasky
- Joy & Jerry Monkarsh
- Ellen & Richard Sandler
- Shapiro Family Foundation

Brenda & Richard Battista
- Kevin Goetz

Margaret Loesch
- Nancy & Fred Rosenfelt

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TEDDY BEAR GOLF - continued from page 4

remarkable individual who does so much to create brighter futures for children.”

Jesse, a partner with Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher and co-chair of its Century City real estate department is a highly regarded leader in his field. Legal 500 lauded him as “One of the best-known lawyers” in Southern California. He is an exemplary philanthropic leader and his commitment to children runs deep. In his acceptance remarks Jesse said, “It is an honor to support such a noteworthy organization that does so much to improve the lives of children with special needs...I am amazed by the phenomenal work they do.”

The Help Group presented its 2009 Joe Angello Volunteer Award to Golf Classic Chair, Charlie Toppino in recognition of his outstanding spirit of volunteerism. The award was created in 1993 in memory of Joe Angello whose remarkable volunteer efforts established the golf tournament 18 years ago.

Judd Swarzman and Ken Solomon, Circle of Friends Board and Golf Classic Committee member, led The Help Group’s Building for the Future auction and invited guests to sponsor a classroom that would be named in their honor. Together they introduced the Opportunity Fund auction to raise funds for at-risk children served by The Help Group. Celebrity players included actors Gary Cole, Joe Mantegna, and Brian Baumgartner, all parents of children with special needs, and renowned tennis legend and philanthropist, Vijay Amritraj.

Our thanks to everyone who helped make this day such a tremendous success!
SUMMIT 2009 CONVENES LEADING EXPERTS IN AUTISM, LEARNING DISABILITIES & ADHD

The Help Group Summit 2009 – Advances and Best Practices in Autism, Learning Disabilities and ADHD took place on Friday, October 2nd and Saturday, October 3rd at The Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. This cutting-edge conference featured more than 20 leading experts from across the country. Generously sponsored by First 5 California and First 5 LA, this year’s Summit was a record breaking success, with more than 600 professionals and parents in attendance.

The two-day conference was co-chaired by Dr. Barbara Firestone, Dr. Paul Satz, Professor Emeritus, UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior and Dr. Peter Whybrow, Director, UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior.

Congressman Brad Sherman (D – 27th) joined Dr. Firestone to convene the Summit. He noted that, “The Help Group not only serves 1300 students on a daily basis, but they are a model for this country on how to provide treatment and education for an array of disabilities, especially autism spectrum disorders.” To mark this special occasion, Congressman Sherman presented The Help Group with an American flag flown over the Capitol building on Independence Day.

During the luncheon program, Dr. Firestone presented The Help Group’s 2009 Distinguished Professional Award to Dr. David Amaral, professor – Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences and the Center for Neuroscience at the UC, Davis and Research Director of the M.I.N.D. Institute.

At the conclusion of the luncheon program, Dr. Firestone saluted Summit Co-Chair Dr. Paul Satz, Chair Emeritus, The Help Group – UCLA Neuropsychology Program for his outstanding achievements and for his leadership in establishing this innovative program. She announced the naming of the Paul Satz Fellowship in Clinical Neuropsychology in his honor.

For Summit presenters and their presentations, please visit www.thehelpgroup.org

THE HELP GROUP HONORS SENATOR STEINBERG - continued from page 5

& Related Disorders that signals a new agenda of hope.

see related story, p 11

Congressman Brad Sherman (D – 27th) said, “It’s an honor to be here for Senator Steinberg – no one has done more for children, for mental health and for autism spectrum disorders.” Senator John Burton (ret.), former Senate President pro Tem remarked, “Darrell Steinberg has a legacy in this State. What he created through Prop 63 which became the Mental Health Services Act and his current efforts are what heroes are made of. I’m proud to call him my friend.” Senator Carol Liu (D – 21st), Senate Select Committee member acknowledged Senator Steinberg’s work and spoke of the committee’s forthcoming efforts saying, “We have a big agenda for California and we’re going to get this done.” Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas (D – 2nd) said, “I am proud to be a colleague and friend to Darrell Steinberg. What distinguishes him is his compassion and passion that were broadly defined in the area of mental health. Darrell is a star.” At the close of the program Senator Steinberg acknowledged his friends and colleagues, “Thank you so much – I’m truly honored by this recognition. I join you proudly in this work and in your efforts to change lives. We have more work to do…as we restore matters of our state we must make the issue of the mind – mental health and autism spectrum disorders the public policy priorities that they must be.”
Youth program. For more than 20 years, The Help Group's students have participated in the program's school-based community service projects that emphasize the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others.

Greg Gallagher, Program Coordinator, spoke of the positive impact Help Group students make every year, "We are so proud of our partnership with the Help Group. The Help Group participants in the Milken Festival for positive change in their communities. You are caretakers of our planet and we are in good hands."

The first study, funded by a generous donation from Lily Shapell Foundation, is testing the effectiveness of an evidence-based social skills intervention to improve friendship quality and social skills for teens with high-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The friends of the Semel Institute and The Nathan and Lily Shapell Foundation, is testing the effectiveness of an evidence-based social skills intervention to improve friendship quality and social skills for teens with high-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

Topics of instruction include a wide range of focus areas, for example: how to appropriately use humor, how to enter and exit conversations between peers, how to handle rejection, teasing, and bullying and how to resolve conflict during arguments with peers.

Using a teacher-assisted social skills intervention known as PEERS, differences in the improvement of friendship skills will be assessed across two groups of students at Village Glen Middle School. Approximately half of the students are being given daily classroom instruction under the PEERS program, with an emphasis on the rules and steps of social etiquette related to improving friendships; while the other half are receiving the standard social skills curriculum. Parents, students, and teachers will be completing questionnaires at the beginning and the end of the classes to measure the change in friendship quality and social functioning for teens. Currently, 82 families have signed up for the study and have undergone pre-testing, representing the largest clinical trial of its kind to help improve friendships for adolescents with ASD. Classes are underway and set to wrap-up in December 2009.

In a similar study investigating the benefit of using a caregiver-assisted version of the PEERS intervention for young adults with ASD, Dr. Alex Gantman of the UCLA Semel Institute is testing the utility of this treatment for transitional youth between 18-23 years of age. Approximately 30 young adults with ASD, along with parents and other caregivers, are participating in this intervention to improve social skills for this highly underserved population. Lessons including the rules of dating etiquette and strategies to avoid victimization and exploitation have been added to the PEERS curriculum. Groups are currently being held at the Sherman Oaks campus of The Help Group and include graduates of Village Glen School. Results of these two studies will be available in 2010.
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A B O U T  T H E  H E L P  G R O U P

The Help Group is dedicated to the education, treatment and outreach of children with autism and other special needs.

S P E C I A L I Z E D  D A Y  S C H O O L S

Village Glen School for students with social and communicative disorders including Asperger’s Disorder and high functioning autism; The PACE Program is available for gifted students. The Beacon Program educates students with behavioral challenges.

Young Learners Preschool for Autism for children with autism spectrum disorders.

Bridgeport School for students with social, communicative and mild cognitive delays.

Sunrise School for students with autism and related developmental disabilities.

Summit View School for students with learning differences.

Coldwater Canyon Prep for students with learning differences, attentional and emotional issues.

Harbor School West is a unique school where students can feel safe to be themselves.

Pacific Schools for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities.

C L I N I C A L  P R O G R A M S

The Mental Health Services Program provides psychiatry, individual, family and group therapy, case management, day treatment services for at-risk preschoolers and after school enrichment for at-risk children and vocational services.

The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders features multidisciplinary assessment, consultation, intervention, family support, after school programs and summer camp for children with autism and Asperger’s Disorder. This program offers seminars for parents and professionals and promotes public awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Stepping Stones Preschool Program for children with behavioral and emotional difficulties offers a therapeutic day treatment program for preschoolers who are challenged by special needs.

The Speech and Language Disorders Program and Occupational Therapy Program provides comprehensive assessment and intervention services on current research and best practices in individual, small group and classroom settings.

The Help Group - UCLA Neuropsychology Program is an innovative partnership of The Help Group and UCLA’s Neuropsychiatric Institute. This program provides neuropsychological assessments and consultations for children, adolescents and young adults and enriches the field of knowledge through their research and educational endeavors.

The Help Group - UCLA Autism Research Alliance is an innovative partnership between The Help Group and the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. It is dedicated to enhancing and expanding clinical research into Autism Spectrum Disorders education and treatment and to contributing to the development, greater understanding and use of best practice models by educators and clinicians.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention Programs include child and family counseling, family preservation, teen parenting counseling, parent education and family reunification counseling.

Wraparound Program A strength-based family-focused program used by communities to support children and families with complex needs.

R E S I D E N T I A L  S E R V I C E S

Village Glen Commons is a therapeutic boarding school for adolescents on the autism spectrum with challenges in the areas of socialization, communication, and peer relations.

Project Six creates therapeutic living opportunities in nurturing, home-like settings. With a full continuum of integrated services, these programs promote personal and interpersonal development, vocational and independent living skills for adolescents and young adults.

P R O F E S S I O N A L  D E V E L O P M E N T

Graduate & Post-Graduate Training Programs

Continuing Medical Education Seminars

Distinguished Lecturer Series

The Help Group Summit - Advances and Best Practices in Autism, Learning Disabilities & ADHD

I N I T I A T I V E S

The Help Group National Autism Foundation

The Help Group Autism Awareness Campaign
Founded in 1975, The Help Group is the largest, most innovative and comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States serving children with special needs related to autism, Asperger’s Disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, mental retardation, abuse and emotional problems.

The Help Group’s eight specialized day schools offer pre-K through high school programs for more than 1,300 students. The Help Group’s wide range of mental health and therapy services, child abuse and residential programs extend its reach to more than 6,000 children and their families each year. With over 800 staff members, The Help Group’s state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on four major campuses in the Los Angeles area.

The Help Group is highly regarded for its high standards of excellence, unique scope and breadth of services. Through its public awareness, professional training and parent education programs and efforts at the state and national levels, The Help Group touches the lives of children with special needs across the country and in other parts of the world.

At the heart of its effort is the commitment to helping young people fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Teddy Bear Ball
honoring
Brian Goldner
President & CEO, Hasbro, Inc.

Mary Urquhart Max Mayer
Parent Advocate Writer & Director, “Adam”

The Beverly Hilton Hotel
December 7, 2009

The Help Group Holiday Carnival
Sherman Oaks Campus
December 12, 2009

The Teddy Bear Tea
Four Seasons Hotel, Beverly Hills
February 23, 2010

Keyes European Mercedes-Benz Teddy Bear Golf Classic
Valencia Country Club
April 19, 2010