The Help Group is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a most generous $300,000, two-year grant by the W.M. Keck Foundation for “Building the STEM³ Academy Model” initiative. This gift will enable STEM³ to significantly expand its nationally acclaimed model that enables students with social and learning differences to acquire the skill sets that will prepare them for jobs in STEM-related fields, and to lead more independent, productive and rewarding lives. STEM³ Academy was launched in August 2015 under the innovative leadership of Help Group COO, Dr. Susan Berman.

“We are most grateful to the Foundation for its commitment to supporting our STEM education initiative dedicated to bridging the opportunity divide so often experienced by these young people,” said Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO.

(Continued on Page 3)
A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

How great it is to share the summer edition of HelpLine with you featuring a few highlights from the past HelpGroup year and beginning.

The Help Group’s newest school, STEM³ Academy had a very successful launch last August and will soon begin serving K thru 5th grade programs. The W.M. Keck Foundation recently awarded a major grant to STEM³. In the spring, STEM³ Academy, a participant in the Microsoft YouthSpark “Teaching Brighter Futures" program, had a very special visit from Microsoft’s Mary Stegner and Celeste Alayne.

We’re pleased to announce that Warren de Haan, Founder and Managing Partner of ACORE Capital, will be honored at this year’s 25th Annual Teddy Bear Golf Classic ~ that will surely score a hole-in-one for the children.

Our 9th Annual Teddy Bear Tea was a great success featuring special guest speakers Nina Tassler and Cynthia Littleton, authors of “What I Told My Daughter.”

In April, The Help Group’s Autism Awareness Month initiatives were once again graciously supported by The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®.

It is with great sadness that we pass along the news that helfriend Sue Davis passed away unexpectedly.

We are so grateful for your friendship and commitment to the children.

Best regards,
Gary H. Carmona ~ Dr. Barbara Firestone

W.M. KECK FOUNDATION GRANT OPENS OLD OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND STEM³ ACADEMY (CONT’D FROM COVER)

The Help Group looks forward to “amplifying and strengthening STEM³ Academy’s capacity in a number of domains and to developing a more enhanced program infrastructure," according to Dr. Diane Flannery, Help Group Director of Design and Strategy. The Foundation’s support will help to build capacity to reach more students and to provide practical experiences through a vibrant mentorship and internship program, and to forge partnerships with area industry. Additionally, it will help to create the advanced, experiential-based curricula with essential social skills tools that are most needed by STEM³ students.

The W.M. Keck Foundation was founded in 1954, with the goal of generating far-reaching benefits for humanity. In Southern California, the foundation supports the education and healthy development of children and youth through its support of organizations that provide early childhood and pre-collegiate education. The W.M. Keck Foundation is making a real difference in helping young people prepare for their next steps. We thank them for believing in our young people and for encouraging their growth and potential.

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CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Celeste Alayne
Brenda Battista
Linda Bell Blue
Bruce Berman
Han. Howard & Jana Berman
Carrie Black
John Brady
Anne Costello
Susanne & Greg Daniels
Susanne & Robert Davidow
Han. Gray & Sharon Davis
Jane & Michael Dorez
Samantha & Jonathan Firestone
Elizabeth & Lee Gablett
Mayor Eric Garcetti & First Lady Amy
Eleane Wexler
Theresa Gamba
Anne & Jim Gianopulos
Jonathan & Dr. Nancy Glaser
Barbara & Brian Goldiner
Brian Grazer
Han. Wendy Gmuel & Dean Schramm
Sheri Hopkins
Quiney Jones
Ronne & Michael Kassan
Kathleen & Jason Katims
Brian & Susan Kennedy
Han. Paul & Gay Koretz
Dianne Lau
Diane Lempert
Ron Mayer
Wendy & Barry M. Mayer
Lori & Michael Milber
Lori & Michael Milton
Sarah & Jeremy Milton
Philip P. Miller
Emily & John Richards Nogawski
Dawn Ostroff
Ande Rosenblum
Nadine & Frederic Rosen
Patty & Michael Rosenfield
Cheryl & Haim Saban
Sonia Salaman
Lori & Ted Samuels
Ellen & Richard Sandler
Debbie Sasseen
Stacy & Jesse Sharf
Han. Brad & Lisa Sherman
Malissa & Bobby Shriver
Stacey Snider
Lisa Solomon
Joseph Sprung
Han. Darnell Stemberg
Steve Tisch
Han. Mark Ridley-Thomas
Mery & Bill Uphart
Claire & D. Michael Van Konyenburg
Han. Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Han. Zev & Barbara Yaroslavsky
Barbara & Stanley Zax

The Help Group’s Keys for Kids Teddy Bear Golf Classic Awards Reception
Honoring Warren de Haan Founder & Managing Partner ACORE Capital

For more information visit www.thehelpgroup.org

W.M. KECK FOUNDATION
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The Help Group greatly appreciates Microsoft’s support. In 2014, Microsoft YouthSpark awarded The Help Group a monumental $800,000 product grant for its “Building Brighter Futures for Young People with Special Needs” technology initiative. In 2011, Microsoft awarded The Help Group a $500,000 product donation for “Tools for the Future: The Help Group Technology Project.” These grants have enabled The Help Group to promote its students’ digital literacy, learning, achievement and preparation for post-secondary education and vocational workplace opportunities.

The STEM³ students were proud to demonstrate the abilities that they have been developing in preparation for their post-secondary and workplace endeavors. “Microsoft recognizes the great work that The Help Group is doing on behalf of young people with special needs, and is fulfilling its commitment to these remarkable young people through technology,” Celeste remarked.

“Our many thanks to Microsoft for giving us the tools to equip our schools and programs with the latest technology that provides our students and staff with invaluable resources,” said Dr. Barbara Firestone.

“I can’t remember when I have had such a rewarding day,” Mary said. “I will remember it for a long time.”

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Microsoft Philanthropies
The Help Group’s 9th Annual Teddy Bear Tea ~ An Affair of the Heart was an unforgettable afternoon featuring special guest speakers entertainment executive Nina Tassler and Managing Editor of Television for Variety, Cynthia Littleton. The event was hosted by Sandra Stern, President of Lornagate Television and a member of the Circle of Friends Board, and co-hosted by Celeste Alleyne, Director of Citizenship and Public Affairs and U.S. Education Lead at Microsoft, and Theresa Gamba, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Acquired Programming for the NBCUniversal Owned Television Stations.

Dr. Barbara Firestone began the afternoon by thanking all of those in attendance and introducing special guests. “Our Tea is a celebration of remarkable women like yourselves who support our efforts on behalf of the children.”

Sandra welcomed returning guests and new friends to the Tea. “I’ve always had a special place in my heart for the children and feel a great sense of pride in being a part of The Help Group Family,” she said. “Every time I see these beautiful children I am inspired to do all that I can to help.”

Parent speaker Kerry Nachenberg moved guests with her son’s story. She said her son was diagnosed with autism at just 2 years old and noted that each and every day has become a milestone. She continued, “After having difficulty finding the right school to address his challenges, we found a safe haven at The Help Group.”

“ ‘The Help Group changed our life for the better,’ Kerry said.

Dr. Barbara Firestone, Nina Tassler, Cynthia Littleton, Sarah Taylor and The Help Group Children’s Choir

Sarah Milken, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Nina Tassler, Cynthia Littleton, Sandra Stern, Ronni bears, Ellen DeGeneres, Nancy Josephson, B. Dr. Barbara Firestone, Nina Tassler, Cynthia Littleton, Sandra Stern, Help Group COO, Dr. Susan Berman and Help Group Student Elijah

Dr. Sarah Bream, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Sarah Milken, Dan Patrick, Lornagate Television and a member of the Circle of Friends Board, and co-hosted by Celeste Alleyne, Director of Citizenship and Public Affairs and U.S. Education Lead at Microsoft, and Theresa Gamba, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Acquired Programming for the NBCUniversal Owned Television Stations.

Celeste Alleyne and Dr. Barbara Firestone, Nina Tassler, Cynthia Littleton, Sandra Stern, Help Group COO, Dr. Susan Berman and Help Group Student Estefany.

Dr. Mary Bauman, Dr. Sarah Bream, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Samantha Firestone, Rulla Hernandez, Monica Wawrzyniak, Mary Ames, Candace Hobson, Christina Piranio, Help Group Director of Risk Management, Shera Zahedi, Kari Van Gundy, Anahid Kasparian, Mercedes Labat, Belinda Gillis, Arpi Semerdjian, Celeste Alleyne and Julia Coskay, R. Lori Coopers, T. Kerry Nachenberg, T. Joe Smith, M. Berlina, N. Michael, S. Teagan, P. Clark, Clinical Director, Dr. Mary Bauman, T. Tara Taylor and The Help Group Children’s Choir.

“The Help Group changed our life for the better,” Kerry said.

“We were finally at a school that not only accepted us, but loved us and could help guide us on this journey.”

The Help Group’s Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Susan Berman, invited guests to support The Help Group’s Dr. Adam Opportunity Fund that provides food, clothing and shelter, and other assistance such as scholarships, vocational training, summer camps and after-school enrichment programs to more than 1,600 underserved children and their families. Dr. Berman introduced Estefany, a student at The Help Group’s North Hills Prep School, who spoke about the immense difficulties she faced as a child.

Estefany credited The Help Group’s North Hills Prep with giving her the emotional support and guidance she needed, as well as the support of the Opportunity Fund, with helping her realize her dream of attending college in the fall where she plans to major in psychology and minor in performing arts.

One of the highlights of the event was a thought-provoking Q&A segment led by Dr. Firestone with authors Nina and Cynthia, who captivated the audience with the insights they shared from their book, What I told my Daughter: Lessons from Leaders and Diverse Women to Reflect on the Best Advice They’ve Given their Daughters throughout Their Lives.

Other highlights of the afternoon included heartwarming performances by The Help Group Children’s Choir and a book signing by Nina and Cynthia at the close of the event.
Each Summit View campus has a principal serving as college counselor. Both have many years of experience working in college counseling and have built great relationships with colleges and universities throughout the United States. The college counselor starts working with students and parents beginning in 8th grade with transition/college information events, which continue year after year.

Individual college counseling meetings with students and parents begin in 11th grade. At this time, students typically start exploring and visiting colleges and researching accommodations, and we make recommendations to guide the process. College reps visit our campuses to meet with 11th and 12th graders, and we also take students to visit local colleges. Starting in 12th grade, students work with our college counselors to complete their applications. Summit View supports each student and family through every step of the process, and I’m pleased that very rarely do our families feel the need to work with private college counselors.

Q: The college admissions process values students who are well-rounded. How does Summit View provide opportunities for learning and growth outside the classroom?

A: We encourage students to create experiences during their time with us. Playing on our CIF sports teams, participating in our drama programs, taking part in a community service project – all these activities help build strong relationships among peers, build self-confidence, and give our students the opportunity to develop and utilize their unique strengths and talents. Our small and nurturing environment provides a safe place for students to step outside their comfort zone and get involved in a myriad of activities. Often these experiences that students remember well beyond graduation day.

Q: Summit View provides students with a lot of individualized support, whether it’s working on executive functioning skills, time management, test-taking strategies, or integrating technology and assistive technology to allow them to better access the curriculum. What happens to your graduates when they’re on their own?

A: Our students thrive in college. From the beginning, self-advocacy is a critical part of the Summit View program. Our students develop an understanding of who they are as learners, which is necessary for their success with us, as well as in college. They need to understand what will benefit them most, whether it be pulling from a toolbox or seeking the assistance of a resource officer or professor. Knowing who they are, what supports they need, and how to get those supports in college and beyond are skills we build over the course of a student’s time with us. And the good news is that most colleges and universities do now have resources and support offices for students with learning differences, in response to increased awareness and understanding.

To learn more about Summit View School or schedule a tour, please visit www.summitview.org.
The mission of Village Glen School is to guide and support students on the Autism Spectrum and others with special needs in reaching their full potential socially, communicatively, and academically. Village Glen adheres to the belief that students should experience the joy of learning as a lifelong process and develop unique talents and skills in preparation for their future goals. “We seek to inspire students to become creative thinkers, committed and independent citizens, and compassionate, self-reliant individuals through partnerships with parents, the school, and the community,” said Pamela Clark, Director of The Help Group’s Autism Schools.

Village Glen School
A place where students belong...
Fostering social & communication skills

Elementary-Middle School
Village Glen’s Elementary and Middle School are innovative programs that serve students Kindergarten through 8th grade, promoting social and personal well-being and strong academic achievement. As students mature, the focus expands to address strengthening students’ organization, time management, critical thinking skills, and work habits.

High School
In the High School, the curriculum focuses on the students’ integration, synthesis and application of their individual learning styles and the knowledge they have acquired. As a college preparatory program, academics are rigorous; there is a strong emphasis on the development of executive functioning skills and promoting appropriate social skills, complimented by a rich and rewarding extracurricular program.

Parents
Village Glen Schools firmly adhere to the adage that “It Takes a Village to Raise a Child.” There are several avenues through which parents can be involved in their child’s school life. For example, Village Glen Schools are very lucky to have fabulous Parent Associations who work hand-in-hand with the schools to support additional enrichment opportunities. The Help Group is grateful to its community of friends and partners, including the California Department of Education, for their future goals.

In recognition of National Autism Awareness Month, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® made The Help Group’s “Learn the Facts & Early Signs” brochures available in its 193 stores in the western United States. Information about autism was also made available on its in-store televisions displays and The Coffee Bean’s social media outlets.

John Fuller, President & CEO of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®, explained the company’s commitment to the annual outreach effort: “The number of families impacted by autism has grown tremendously in recent years. The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® will continue to work with our friends at The Help Group to do all we can to promote greater awareness and understanding of autism.”

Gelson’s hosted its annual autism awareness and fund-raising campaign in support of the children of The Help Group at all of its 18 Southern California locations. “Learn the Facts” brochures were made available in stores, and customers had the opportunity to make donations to The Help Group.

Rob McDougall, President & CEO of Gelson’s, spoke about Gelson’s longstanding commitment to giving back to the communities it serves. “It is likely that many of our customers and staff know or love a child with autism. We’re here to help and glad to lend a hand.”

“Our heartfelt thanks to The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® and to Gelson’s for joining us once again in our annual campaign,” said Dr. Barbara Firestone. “It’s through outstanding corporate partners like The Coffee Bean and Gelson’s that we are able to reach many families with this important information about autism.”

The “Learn the Facts and Early Signs” brochures are available online in English and Spanish, and additional copies can be requested by calling 877.943.5747.
FESTIVAL OF ARTS SPONSORED BY BEAR GIVERS FEATURES 180 YOUNG ARTISTS

With a variety of art on display, The Help Group held its 7th annual Festival of Arts: A Celebration of Young Artists. This exhibition was held on Sunday, April 10 and sponsored by the New York based nonprofit Bear Givers. The show presented three exhibits – “Through Our Eyes” an exhibition of more than 120 original paintings by students, “Inside Out” a collection of images and written words told through photography; and “The Art of STEM” showcasing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math works by STEM Academy.

The exhibits were on display at The Help Group’s – Autism Center and provided a wonderful backdrop for students to display their artistic pieces. The special reception was a culmination of the school year’s art program and STEM projects led by faculty. The Help Group West’s Village Glen School engaged in a project with Senior Clinical Director and accomplished photographer, Pat Sandler to utilize the mediums of photography and writing in order to explore themselves and their worlds, as well as those things that mattered most to them. Pat’s photographic portraits of each inside/out student participant were displayed along with the students’ writing in order to explore themselves and their worlds, as well as those things that mattered most to them. Pat’s photographic portraits of each inside/out student participant were displayed along with the students’ writing in order to explore themselves and their worlds, as well as those things that mattered most to them.

“The Village Glen Recorder Ensemble and The Help Group Children’s Choir added to the ‘artful’ day with their special musical performances. “Today is such a wonderful event, where we are able to showcase our students’ creative talents,” said Dr. Barbara Firestone. “We are grateful to Bear Givers for their support of this special arts program year after year.”

“Bear Givers community art shows are only successful with partners like The Help Group, who have taken the idea and changed a lot of lives,” said Joseph Sprung, Bear Givers Chairman. “We’re so thankful to be a small part of The Help Group Festival of Arts and our hearts are so filled when we come here. We feel so fortunate to be just a small part of this organization. Thank you.”

Diane Lempert, President of Bear Givers, also spoke adding, “Every year we are excited to see what’s new and what’s exciting, but the one thing that always consistent is the beauty and creativity of the artwork and how the kids are so generous in letting us experience the world through their eyes. It’s a really wonderful experience for all of us.”

HELP GROUP STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS CULMINATION

This sports season The Help Group was so pleased to team-up with The Mirman School and Harvard-Westlake School. Now in its second year, the Special Olympics Southern California in partnership with The Help Group has expanded its sports program to have culminating Game Days with local schools. The School Partnership Program is designed to unify students with and without special needs through sports and whole-school involvement activities to promote acceptance and respect for all young people. These special events gave Help Group athletes the chance to demonstrate the sports skills and physical abilities that they have learned and practiced throughout the season.

“Mirman has a remarkable student body whose spirit of generosity towards our students was truly beautiful to see,” shared Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group Chief Operating Officer and Mirman School’s former Board Chair. “They welcomed and supported Help Group students so enthusiastically throughout the games – and gave our young athletes a chance to shine.”

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On May 25, more than 75 students from The Help Group’s Early Education Programs, participated in the Young Athletes Festival, hosted by Mirman School. Mirman’s Upper School, first through fifth graders, had the opportunity to support Help Group students ages 3 through 7.

“Mirman has a remarkable student body whose spirit of generosity towards our students was truly beautiful to see,” shared Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group Chief Operating Officer and Mirman School’s former Board Chair. “They welcomed and supported Help Group students so enthusiastically throughout the games – and gave our young athletes a chance to shine.”

Our tremendous thanks to Kim Villa, Program Specialist, and Laura Mayo for making these such wonderful Game Days for our students and their families. A special thanks to Harvard-Westlake School’s Father Jay Young and Mr. Mike Mori and to Mirman School’s Dan Vonenberg, Alison Denner and Angela Brown, to all of the student volunteers and to Pamela Clark, Help Group Director of Autism Schools, and our wonderful Help Group coaches, volunteers and staff for your tremendous support of our athletes.
The Miracle Project

This spring, The Help Group’s Kids Like Me and The Miracle Project held two performances, “Journey to Dance Island” on March 13 and “Dance Island” on April 17. These productions were written and performed by students with special needs and were the culmination of a 20-week theater and arts program experience that took place at the Sherman Oaks Campus and at the Culver City Campus. This was the first year the performing arts program was offered in Culver City.

The Miracle Project was created by Elaine Hall to give young people with autism and other disabilities the opportunity to express themselves through music, dance, acting, and story writing. “It has been a miraculous experience to witness a group of students grow in self-confidence, social skills, communication, and joy as they embarked on this 20-week experience with one another,” said Ryan Berman, Chief Operating Officer at The Miracle Project.

This year’s cast and crew met at The Help Group once a week starting last fall to develop the story and its many components. This is the sixth year The Help Group and The Miracle Project have partnered. This year’s cast and crew met at The Help Group once a week starting last fall to develop the story and its many components. This is the sixth year The Help Group and The Miracle Project have partnered.

“Every year, we see how our partnership with The Miracle Project is transforming young people and giving them the opportunity to share their passion and talent,” said Nicole Webb, Program Director of the Kids Like Me Program at The Help Group. “It’s inspiring to see how the arts can have such a positive impact and we are pleased to be able to offer this experience to our students.”

This coming school year, The Miracle Project with Kids Like Me will begin its 20-week program at The Help Group’s campuses in Sherman Oaks on September 8 and in Culver City on September 12. The Kids Like Me After School Program with Ryan Berman will offer an “Improv For Interaction” class in the spring. For more information on the Sherman Oaks program, contact Nicole Webb at 818.778.7136 and Tracy Peters for Culver City at 310.751.1486.

For more information about Kids Like Me, visit www.kidslikeme.com

THE HELP GROUP AND THE MIRACLE PROJECT PRESENT ALL-NEW MUSICALS

THE SHAKESPEARE AND AUTISM PROJECT MAKES ITS L.A. DEBUT AT THE HELP GROUP

A groundbreaking initiative, the Shakespeare and Autism Project made its Los Angeles debut at The Help Group on Friday, May 13 and Saturday, May 14 at the state-of-the-art Autism Center Theater. Presented by The Ohio State University Department of Theatre with Kelly Hunter and the Flute Theater, 15 students from The Help Group’s Bridgeport School were invited to take part in these unique and interactive performances of Shakespeare’s The Tempest.

“At The Help Group, we’re deeply committed to performing arts and believe that all arts provide pathways to self-expression, self-discovery, creativity and self-esteem for our young people,” expressed Dr. Barbara Firestone in her welcome remarks to Help Group parents and Ohio State administration and alumni. “We are delighted that our children have the opportunity to take part in this dynamic and engaging production of The Tempest.”

Students participated on stage with the project’s teaching artists in this highly specialized, education-meets-theater concept. “I started using the rhythm of the heartbeat based in Shakespeare’s iambic pentameter, and then role playing the characters with very simple games that are short, fun and repeatable,” explains Kelly Hunter, a professional actress and emeritus member of the Royal Shakespeare Company who developed the “Hunter Heartbeat Method,” which became the foundation of the project. “The idea was for children to experience the theater, form the habit of playing imaginatively, and to most of all enjoy themselves.”

In collaboration with the university’s Nixon Center, Dr. Marc Tassé, the center’s director, and his doctoral students are conducting research to see how the impact of this program helps children with autism over time. The study is based on the “Hunter Heartbeat Method” and accompanying theater-based games as intervention for children with autism. Dr. Tassé says that researchers have noticed significant improvements in social communication, peer relations and adaptation skills. Lead doctoral student Margaret Markel, in attendance with Dr. Tassé for the performance and post-performance discussion, explained, “We’ve seen major improvements in social and facial motion recognition after following the program for a 42-week study that engaged children across five schools and learning centers.”

Kevin McClatchy, director, Shakespeare and Autism Project at the university Department of Theater and one of the teaching artists shared, “The games are constructed in a way that challenge some of the things that children with autism confront. Through the hour twenty-minutes of the performance you see the transformative experience that allows the children with autism to connect. It’s a gift to be able to do this work. I get as much from the children as they might get from me.”

These special performances were made possible by the Patricia Heaton-Hunt and David Hunt Shakespeare and Autism Fund.

We greatly appreciate The Ohio State University Department of Theatre with Kelly Hunter and the Flute Theater, and all of the teaching artists, Kevin McClatchy, Mahmoud Oseman, Robin Post, Gregory Hicks, Chris MacDonald, and Eva Taueg who performed with our students. Our heartfelt thanks for bringing this wonderful program to the children of The Help Group.

A month before the project’s premiere in Los Angeles, Dr. Barbara Firestone, David Manderscheid, OSU Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Holly Daniels, Director of Advance LA, and Dr. Marc Tassé, attended the Ohio State University’s Department of Theatre’s inaugural performance of The Shakespeare and Autism Project at the university’s Flute Theater. Dr. Firestone, in her introduction to the event, said, “Shakespeare and the arts have the power to change lives. The Tempest, in particular, is the story of transformation and change. It’s a story of change. It’s a story of growth.”

Dr. Manderscheid shared, “I think part of the magic of Shakespeare is his ability to take things from the past and make them relevant in the present.”

Kevin McClatchy, in his closing remarks, said, “I have a deep respect for this work. I get as much from the children as they might get from me.”

We thank all who participated in this incredible event and who continue to support our programs. More than 70 young adults attended Advance LA’s 2016 Day for Young Adults, a one-of-a-kind event designed specifically for teens and young adults. The event on July 16 featured interactive workshops that provided attendees with the opportunity to practice new skills, interact with peers and make new friendships.

This year’s event included sessions on topics ranging from managing stress, getting organized and acting the next job interview to dating, fashion, technology and social media. The day also included a chance to learn mindful awareness and time management. During lunch, Paws and Pals volunteer Victoria Marsh and her dachshund therapy dog Clyde also came by to meet the attendees. The day ended with a fun ice cream social and dance party.

“We were pleased to have so many engaged young adults at this year’s conference and to see such significant interest in sessions dealing with social skills,” said Dr. Holly Daniels, Director of Advance LA. “This was a great opportunity for our young people to interact and get involved with their friends and peers. We were also happy to see so many parents come to the event to take part in our Parent to Parent sessions and discussion.”

Our thanks to everyone who participated - it was a wonderful event!
ABC7, CBS2 AND KCAL9 COVER SUNRISE SCHOOL’S ROARING 20’S PROM

The Help Group’s Sunrise School students and their families celebrated a day to remember at their roaring 20’s themed prom. More than 40 students were dressed in their finest to take part in this meaningful rite of passage for all teens. In preparation for this special occasion, students practiced social skills and prom etiquette to help them get ready for the dance that was held on Thursday, May 26.

“We believe in providing a full range of opportunities that foster the growth of our students in all essential areas, including social development,” shared Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group Chief Operating Officer. “It’s wonderful to see our terrific school community, together with the support of our terrific school community, together with the support of families, create such a meaningful day like this one.”

For mothers like Sue Rosen, being able to see her son dance and do the things other kids can do meant a lot to her. “It’s among my greatest joys and hardest burdens,” she said, “but overall, days like this are just amazing.”

“It’s all about quality of life for these kids, and they deserve it, just like anybody else does,” said Sue Anne, Sunrise School Principal. She started the prom five years so that students with moderate to severe autism could experience this special rite of passage. Sue Anne said seeing the students enjoy themselves brings her to tears. “It’s my favorite day of the year,” she added. “They’re my gift. So we get to celebrate with them. And they show us what they can do, and we display it proudly for everyone to see.”

The prom is held during school hours so the students feel comfortable, but just like all other proms, there were grand entrances, corsages and photos. Parent Judy Wolf attended with her daughter Katie, who recently graduated after 10 years at the school. “It’s just such a joy to see her so happy and to see her get into it,” she said, “it lets me have the opportunity to fuss over her and get a dress.” And when student Kyle Rosen was asked what his favorite part of the dance was, he said, “You feel better.”

A special thank you to ABC7, CBS2 and KCAL9 News for their coverage of the event and wonderful news segments they featured.

For more information about Sunrise School, please visit, www.thegroup.org/school/sunrise-school
The Help Group is dedicated to the education, treatment and outreach of children, adolescents and young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other special needs.

**SPECIALIZED DAY SCHOOLS**

Our newest school, STEM Academy, provides an innovative and rigorous K-12 curriculum for students with social and learning differences, including autism, who have a passion for STEM fields and may benefit from experiential learning approaches.* **4**

With a 98% college acceptance rate, Summit View School is a college-preparatory program for students with learning differences who possess average to above-average intellectual capabilities.*

Village Glen School is a college preparatory program that serves students K-12 with high-functioning autism and challenges in the areas of socialization, language development and peer relations. The Pace Program offers honors and AP classes for gifted students. The Beacon Program provides additional positive behavior support for students with behavioral challenges.*

Young Learners Preschool uses an evidence-based and interdisciplinary approach to intensive early intervention for children ages 2.9 to 5 with autism spectrum disorder. Bridgeport School provides basic skills education, community-based instruction and vocational training, for students ages 5 to 22 with mild to moderate cognitive delays and challenges with social communication and/or language development. Bridgeport Vocational Education Center is for young adults with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental differences, ages 18 to 22, providing vocational skills training, including supported job placements. Sunrise School is a functional life skills program serving students ages 5 to 22 with moderate to severe cognitive delays associated with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities.

The Help Group’s Westview is a college preparatory program for students with mild emotional issues, ADHD and learning differences. The Help Group’s North Hills Prep offers a college preparatory curriculum while supporting students with social emotional challenges.*

The Help Group’s Parkhill School is an intensive therapeutic program serving children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral challenges.

* A WASC accredited school
**WASC accreditation in process

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

The Help Group’s mental health programs provide a continuum of comprehensive outpatient services for children and families, including assessment; individual, family and group therapy; care management; psychiatric services; parenting groups, in-home counseling; school-based mental health counseling; REACH - after-school day rehabilitation; Stepping Stones - an intensive day treatment for children ages 3 to 5 and therapeutic behavioral services. Wraparound is an innovative program designed to maintain at-risk children in their homes and avoid placement in institutions or other restrictive settings.

**AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER PROGRAMS**

The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder features multidisciplinary assessment, consultation, intervention, family support groups, as well as seminars for parents and professionals.

**RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Kids Like Me provides after-school enrichment, social skills groups and day camps designed specifically for children and adolescents with ASD and other developmental challenges. Teens on the Go is a travel camp for young people with ASD. club l.a. TEEN provides a supported social network for teens with ASD.

**VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The Community Employment Program assists adolescents and young adults with social-emotional and/or mental health challenges with the special guidance, skills and support needed to obtain and maintain successful employment.

Silverlining Reveal Boutique & Vocational Training Center provides students with special needs the opportunity to learn and develop valuable work experience and job skills that contribute to their knowledge, self-confidence, employability and future independence.

**RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS**

Project Six is a therapeutic boarding option for teens ages 13 to 17 with Asperger’s Disorder, ASD, mood and anxiety disorders, and learning differences.

Project Six Adult Residential Program provides community-based group homes for adults with developmental disabilities.

**PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & RESEARCH**

The Help Group - UCLA Autism Research Alliance is dedicated to enhancing and expanding clinical research in the education and treatment of ASD and to contributing to the development, greater understanding and use of best practice models by researchers, educators and clinicians.

The Help Group - USC Occupational Science Initiative is dedicated to developing evidence-based intervention programs for children with ASD through an interdisciplinary team of researchers, educators and clinicians.
UPCOMING EVENTS

- **inside/out photography exhibition**
  
  dnj Gallery at Bergamot Station
  
  Opening Reception, September 10, 2016

- **Keyes for Kids Teddy Bear Golf Classic**
  
  Honoring Warren de Haan
  
  Valencia Country Club
  
  September 26, 2016

- **The Help Group SUMMIT 2016**
  
  Advances and Best Practices in Autism – ADHD – Learning Disabilities
  
  Skirball Cultural Center
  
  October 14 - October 15, 2016

- **The Help Group’s Teddy Bear Ball**
  
  The Beverly Hilton Hotel
  
  December 7, 2016

- **Annual Holiday Carnival**
  
  The Help Group - Sherman Oaks
  
  December 10, 2016

For more information on these and other events, please call 818.779.5212