On Saturday, December 8th The Help Group hosted its Holiday Carnival to make the season extra bright for 1,100 children and families served by The Help Group’s Family-Centered Support Programs, Mental Health & Clinical Programs and Residential Services.

The Sherman Oaks campus was transformed into a winter wonderland where families could enjoy various games, rides, food, arts and crafts, face painting, a petting zoo and a time-honored visit with Santa Claus.

As is tradition, longtime Help Group supporter Hasbro donated hundreds of toys and games to the carnival, ensuring that every child could take a wrapped present home. Young people from The Help Group’s Kids Like Me club l.a. TEEN program for young people with autism and other challenges helped to pass out gifts to all the children. The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® were on hand this year to serve holiday beverages.

“We are so grateful to Hasbro, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® and the 150 volunteers and staff who made the Holiday Carnival truly an unforgettable day for children and families served by The Help Group,” said Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO.

(Continued on Page 8)
A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

We are delighted to share this special edition of HelpLine with you. During the holidays, it is especially gratifying to shine a light on some of the people and organizations that support our efforts to build brighter futures for the children.

This past October, our Keyes for Kids Golf Classic honored David Lehman and Peter Weidman. The event was a record-breaking success that truly scored a hole-in-one for the children. We are most appreciative to all involved for their tremendous commitment, generosity and enthusiastic support.

We kicked off the school year with an unforgettable Music for Autism concert featuring cast members from “Waitress” who sang a variety of Broadway and pop songs. Our annual Summit on Autism, Learning Disabilities and ADHD featuring 30 of our nation’s leading experts provided a thought-provoking experience for all who attended.

This December, our Holiday Carnival brought the spirit of the season to 1,100 children and families – our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, the staff and volunteers who made the day so special. For Giving Tuesday, a global day of charitable giving, The Help Group raised funds to help make more concerts possible for our community through our collaboration with Music for Autism.

Our warmest wishes to you and yours for a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year! We are most grateful for your friendship and commitment to the children.

Best wishes for a Happy Holiday season and a wonderful New Year,
Gary H. Carmona ~ Dr. Barbara Firestone

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During the first week of the new school year, on Thursday, August 23, The Help Group hosted a Music for Autism Concert at its Sherman Oaks campus. The concert featured Musical Director, Ryan Cantwell, of the touring company of “Waitress” accompanied by performers from its multi-talented cast. In 2014, Ryan performed at The Help Group for the Music for Autism concert series with the touring company of the Broadway hit musical Pippin.

Dr. Barbara Firestone kicked off the event by welcoming everyone to the concert and thanking Music for Autism, Ryan Cantwell, and the performers for bringing the joy of music to the children.

Ryan welcomed to the stage cast members Desi Oakley, Kyra Kennedy, Emily Koch, Jim Hogan, Rheame Crenshaw, Grace Stockdale, Lexi Bodick and percussionist Elena Bonomo. Students and faculty from The Help Group’s Bridgeport and Village Glen schools danced and sang along to a host of broadway songs.

Students and faculty danced and sang along to a host of Broadway songs. Some of the numbers included in the concert were “Opening Up” from Waitress; “Let It Go” from Frozen and “Somewhere Over The Rainbow” from The Wizard of Oz. And, in a touching moment, a student joined the performers to sing “For Good” – a moving song about friendship from the hit musical Wicked.

“It was so fulfilling to see how music can have such a wonderful effect on young people’s lives,” said Desi Oakley, the lead in the touring company production of Waitress.

Another performer, Grace Stockdale, remarked, “How extraordinary – to be able to bring people together with music, passion, and love. It was absolutely an honor to perform today.”

The concert ended with a rousing reprise of “Opening Up” during the “percussion time” section of the concert. Students and faculty formed a conga line, danced and shook tambourines to the beat of the song. Fun was had by all!

“Ryan Cantwell and the ensemble made such an impactful and unforgettable connection with the children. It was wonderful to see our young people engaged in the magic of music. What an uplifting and incredible day,” said Dr. Barbara Firestone.

Our heartfelt thanks to Music for Autism, Ryan and the performers, for making this such a special day for the children.
The Help Group’s 27th Annual Keyes for Kids Teddy Bear Golf Classic and Lockton Insurance Awards reception honoring David Lehman and Peter Weidman was held on October 1st at the Valencia Country Club. The event was truly an unforgettable, record-breaking success.

The Help Group presented its Help Fore Children Humanitarian Award to David Lehman, Global Head of Estate Finance in the Investment Banking Division at Goldman Sachs, and Peter Weidman, Partner at Goldman Sachs Group, Merchant Banking Division, for their commitment to building brighter futures for young people with special needs.

This year’s Co-Chairs included Jay Borzi, Senior Managing Director of Eastdil Secured; John Brady, Managing Director & Portfolio Manager for Oaktree Capital; Victor Coleman, Chairman & CEO, Hudson Pacific Properties, and 2002 Golf Honoree; Warren de Haan, Founder & Managing Partner, Acore Capital, and 2016 Golf Honoree; Jonathan Firestone, Managing Director, Eastdil Secured; Michael Hackman, Founder & CEO, Hackman Capital; Jonathan Klein, Managing Director at Fortress Investment Group; Michael May, Senior Managing Director at Cantor Fitzgerald and 2015 Golf honoree; Michael Rosenfeld, Founder & CEO of Woodridge Capital Partners and 2011 Golf honoree; Jesse Sharf, Partner in the Century City office of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher and Co-Chair of the firm’s Real Estate Department and 2009 Golf honoree; Judd Swarzman, Judd Swarzman & Associates and Help Group Board Member; Howard Tenenbaum, Vice President of Keyes Automotive Group; Michael Van Konyenburg, President, Eastdil Secured and 2006 Golf honoree, and Jeffrey Worthe, President, Worthe Real Estate.

During the opening remarks Gary H. Carmona, Help Group Board Chair, and Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO, thanked all of the chairs, donors and friends who so generously support the event. Dr. Firestone remarked, “Today, we are thrilled to salute David and Peter with our 2018 Help Fore Children Humanitarian Award for being such champions for the children of The Help Group.”

Once again, Golf Co-Chair Jesse Sharf shared his thoughts about The Help Group. “I’ve visited The Help Group and seen firsthand how the children benefit immensely from their various schools and programs. So it’s why I’m always here to lend a hand. It’s truly a terrific organization known for its leadership in the field and its innovative approaches that give young people every opportunity to achieve success,” remarked Jesse.

Dr. Firestone welcomed The Help Group’s Choir to the stage, who performed “Can’t Stop The Feeling” and “Ain’t No Mountain
High Enough,” accompanied by Tommy Reeves on the piano and led by Choir Director Charlotte Bashner.

Michael Hackman, Golf Classic Co-Chair and auctioneer extraordinaire, joined the stage to lead the always fun and lively auction of trips, classrooms and teddy bears – paired with a copy of Dr. Firestone and Dr. Richard Ehrlich’s book Faces of Promise: Looking Beyond Autism – for the Dr. Adam Opportunity Fund.

Auction items were graciously donated by AJ Capital Partners, Jeff Worthe of Worthe Real Estate Group, Keyes Automotive Group and Ohana Real Estate Investors. Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group COO, introduced student speaker, Evelyn, a brave and resilient young woman who will benefit from the Opportunity Fund.

Golf Classic Chair, Jonathan Firestone welcomed David and Peter to the stage to salute them for their humanitarian spirit and commitment to the children.

“The Help Group has had the privilege to honor so many amazing individuals and it is with a great sense of pride and admiration that we honor, David Lehman and Peter Weidman. When I called to ask them to accept these honors they did not hesitate for a moment. They said they were happy to help, and were proud to carry the banner for the kids – as all of our past honorees have done. Like everyone here, they know how critical the work of The Help Group is. And, as parents they know how important it is to give every child the opportunity to succeed,” said Jonathan.

In his acceptance remarks, Peter shared, “On behalf of David and myself, and the entire Goldman Sachs team, thank you to everyone who contributed and made this event such a success. What The Help Group does day in and day out for these amazing kids is so special.”

Dr. Firestone thanked David and Peter for their incredibly generous support for our young people, and announced the naming of the new Innovation Lab in honor of the Lehman and Weidman families at The Help Group’s Westview School of Arts & Technology for students with social, emotional and learning challenges.

Our heartfelt appreciation to David Lehman and Peter Weidman, Keyes Automotive Group, Lockton insurance, our golf chairs, sponsors and donors for making the 27th annual Golf Classic an absolute hole-in-one for our kids!
The Help Group’s 22nd annual Summit convened leading experts at the forefront of their fields in autism, ADHD and learning disabilities. Offering thought-provoking presentations and new insights and trends in basic and applied research and evidence-based practices, the Summit brought together more than 500 professionals and parents on Friday, October 19 and Saturday, October 20 at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

Dr. Barbara Firestone kicked off the Summit by welcoming guests, acknowledging this year’s distinguished group of presenters, and highlighting The Help Group’s innovative university partnerships. Dr. Firestone served as chair of this year’s conference along with co-chairs Dr. Peter C. Whybrow, UCLA Semel Institute Director, and Dr. Robert M. Bilder, UCLA Semel Institute Chief of Medical Psychology-Neuropsychology & Tennenbaum Center Director.

NBC4’s co-anchor of “Today in L.A” and award winning broadcast journalist, Daniella Guzman, served as luncheon host this year. With warmth and spirit, Daniella spoke of the importance of The Help Group’s Summit and its extraordinary program.

Dr. Firestone acknowledged Major Sponsor First 5 California for their generous support over the years, and expressed The Help Group’s gratitude to NBC4, LA Parent and The Mighty for their media sponsorships.

Daniella Guzman and Dr. Firestone presented The Help Group’s Champion For Children Award to celebrated actress and television personality Sherri Shepherd in appreciation of her commitment to young people with disabilities and differences and their families,” said Dr. Firestone.
Sherri is a woman of strength and conviction with a heart that knows no bounds when it comes to kids.”

In her acceptance remarks, Sherri said, “As a parent, we want our children to be equipped to go forward in life, to be a productive member of society, and to always be compassionate. I know that at Summit View School, the teachers instill those qualities and more. I am so grateful for The Help Group and for Summit View.”

The Summit featured 26 sessions, including keynote presentations from Dr. Pat Levitt on “Addressing Gastrointestinal Disturbances and Other Co-occurring Medical Conditions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder”; Dr. Thomas Brown on “Understanding and Supporting Children and Teens with ADHD and Asperger Syndrome” on Friday and “How ADHD Impairs Motivation in Some Situations, But Not Others” on Saturday; Dr. Peter Mundy on “The Continuum of Learning Difficulties for Young People On The Spectrum”; Dr. Jeffrey Gilger on “Four-Thought Provoking Questions About Dyslexia” and Dr. Susan Bookheimer on “Sensory Over-Responsivity and the Brain in Autism.”

One clinician who attended the Summit remarked, “Excellent presentations and topics. Excellent Speakers presenting on current research, trends and a variety of topics.” And another attendee shared, “I’ve been attending the Summit for several years now, and it’s always a very valuable experience. As a parent and professional, I appreciate that you offer seminars on the family perspective.”

Our thanks to the incredible group of Summit presenters for providing such a rich, informative experience for everyone who attended.
THE HELP GROUP BRIGHTENS THE SEASON FOR 1,100 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT ITS ANNUAL HOLIDAY CARNIVAL (CONT’D FROM COVER)

1. Dr. Barbara Firestone and Carnival Attendees  2. (L-R) Gary H. Carmona, Help Group Board Chair, Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group COO  3. (L-R) Mike Berk, affiliate Board Member, Susan Berk, Help Group Board Member, Barry N. Nagoshiner, Help Group Board Vice Chair & CFO

GIVING TUESDAY CAMPAIGN HELPS TO GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC

#GIVINGTUESDAY

On November 27th The Help Group’s Giving Tuesday campaign raised funds to help give the gift of music to children with autism and their families through its collaboration with Music for Autism.

We are very grateful to all of the generous donors who participated in this year’s Giving Tuesday.

HELP GROUP CHOIR SPREADS CHEER WITH HOLIDAY CONCERT

This holiday season, The Help Group’s Bridgeport and Village Glen Choir performed a wonderful “Holiday Concert” on December 19th & 20th at the Autism Center on the Sherman Oaks campus.

The choir, under the musical direction of Charlotte Bashner, lit up the stage with their favorite holiday songs to a cheering, enthusiastic audience filled with students, families and faculty.
The Help Group’s STEM³ Academy, the first school in the nation to provide a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) curriculum to students with special needs, held its third annual Very Special Innovation Fair on September 23, 2018. The free event was a family-friendly celebration of talent, imagination, and discovery from young STEM enthusiasts, as well as some of the region’s innovative companies. The event drew in a big crowd with more than 700 people in attendance.

The Innovation Fair was hosted by STEM³ Academy, a pioneering school operated by The Help Group that serves K-12 students who are passionate about STEM topics and benefit from more individualized educational instruction due to social and learning differences. Campuses are located in Valley Glen and Culver City, California.

According to Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group COO, “We’re excited to continue the tradition of bringing the Very Special Innovation Fair to the community. By providing tools and programming tied to STEM for children and teens, The Help Group is playing a vital role in fostering creativity, curiosity, and a new generation of innovators.”

Inspired in part by the Maker Movement, the event featured over 30 interactive activities and companies, including: Microsoft; Northrop Grumman; Raytheon; DroneBase; California Science Center; California Highway Patrol; and many more. Attendees had the chance to learn more about rocketry, robotics, drones, 3D printing, virtual reality and more. There was also food, contests, and giveaways.

Dr. Ellis Crasnow, Director of STEM³ Academy and STEM Education at The Help Group said, “STEM concepts surround us in everyday life. Getting children excited about STEM can make a world of difference as they move through elementary school and into middle school, high school and college. Our goal at STEM³ Academy and with the Very Special Innovation Fair is to help nurture those natural talents early on.”
The Help Group

Leading the Way for
Young People with SPECIAL NEEDS

- Village Glen School
- Bridgeport School
- Bridgeport Vocational Education Center
- Young Learners Preschool
- Sunrise School
- Summit View School
- Westview School of Arts and Technology
- North Hills Prep
- Our Newest School
- STEM³ Academy

Founded in 1975, The Help Group is the largest, most innovative and comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States serving children, adolescents and young adults with special needs related to autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays and emotional challenges.

The Help Group’s ten specialized day schools offer pre-K through high school programs for more than 1,600 students. Its broad range of mental health and therapy services and residential programs extend its reach to more than 6,000 children and their families each year. With more than 1,000 staff members, The Help Group’s state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on five campuses in the Los Angeles area.

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dare to be different
ABOUT THE HELP GROUP
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...STEM3 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.*

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 School of Arts and Technology provides a nurturing learning environment dedicated to supporting students with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, high functioning autism, and/or mild emotional issues and helping them to achieve academic and personal success.*

The Help Group’s North Hills Prep offers a college preparatory curriculum while supporting students with social emotional challenges.*

*A WASC accredited school

MENTAL HEALTH & CLINICAL PROGRAMS
These programs provide a continuum of comprehensive outpatient services for children and families, including assessment; individual, family and group therapy; case management; psychiatric services; parent 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.

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

Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism is a volunteer-supported pet intervention program designed to engage young people with social and communication challenges.

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.

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.

18 + PROGRAMS
Advance LA provides one-on-one life skills coaching for teens and young adults with unique challenges in their transition to independence.

club l.a. facilitates activities for young adults designed to enhance social skills, meet people with similar interests and develop long-lasting friendships.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS
Doctoral Psychology Internships are full-time APA accredited internships in Health Service Psychology.

Post-Doctoral Psychology Fellowships in Pediatric Neuropsychological Assessment and in Autism Evaluation and Treatment.

Clinical Practicum Training for Psychology, Social Work, and MFT Art Therapy trainees.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS
The Help Group – UCLA Neuropsychology Program providing neuropsychological assessments and consultations.


The Help Group – USC Occupational Science Initiative dedicated to developing evidence-based programs for children with ASD.

Managing Editor - Delaney Brewer
Contributing Editor - Lisa Rozati
Graphic Design - Aldo Jimenez
Photo Editor - Julie Hirschberg

* Delaney Brewer
** Lisa Rozati
*** Aldo Jimenez
**** Julie Hirschberg
The Help Group
because every child deserves a great future

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The Help Group's ten specialized day schools offer pre-K through high school programs for more than 1,600 students. Its broad range of mental health and therapy services and residential programs extends its reach to more than 6,000 children and their families each year. With more than 1,000 staff members, The Help Group’s state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on five campuses in the Los Angeles area.

The Help Group is widely regarded for its high standards of excellence and unique scope and breadth of services. Through its public awareness and outreach programs, university partnerships, applied research, graduate and postgraduate professional training, conferences and seminars, parent education programs, publications, and public policy efforts, The Help Group touches the lives of children with special needs and their families throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

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

Schools
Village Glen School · Bridgeport School · Bridgeport Vocational Education Center · Sunrise School
Young Learners Preschool · STEM³ Academy
Summit View School · Westview School of Arts and Technology · North Hills Prep

Programs
The Help Group · UCLA Autism Alliance · The Help Group · UCLA Neuropsychology Program
The Help Group · USC Occupational Science Initiative · Advance LA · Project Six/The Commons
Kids Like Me Recreational Programs & Camps · club l.a./club l.a. TEEN
Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism · The Help Group Child & Family Center
The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder

Campuses
CULVER CITY · SHERMAN OAKS EAST · SHERMAN OAKS WEST
VALLEY GLEN · VAN NUYS

www.thehelpgroup.org  Facebook...

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Music for Autism**
  The Help Group Autism Center
  Winter 2019

- **The Help Group’s Teddy Bear Ball**
  The Beverly Hilton Hotel
  March 2019

- **Special Needs Resource Fair**
  The Help Group Autism Center
  Sunday April, 7th

- **Advance LA Conference**
  American Jewish University
  Friday May, 10th

- **Festival of Arts**
  Santa Monica Art Studios
  Saturday May, 18th

We invite you to follow us on Facebook...