



HelpLine

The Help Group...because every child deserves a great future

WINTER 2014



THE HELP GROUP OPENS NEW EDUCATION BUILDING AT ITS CULVER CITY CAMPUS

It was a truly memorable afternoon when The Help Group cut the ribbon on its newest autism education building on Wednesday, May 21st, at its Culver City Campus joined by dignitaries and friends.

Dr. Barbara Firestone, President & CEO, The Help Group, opened the proceedings, "Today's celebration is about the children and their families

– and the hope and opportunity that this beautiful new building brings. And it's about celebrating the partnership of caring of our Board of Directors, administration, faculty, staff, governmental colleagues and philanthropic friends all working hand in hand for the children to make this new education facility a reality." Help Group Board Chair Gary H. Carmona remarked, "It seems like just yesterday that we were donning

(Read more on pg. 5)

KEYES FOR KIDS TEDDY BEAR GOLF CLASSIC 2014



Keyes for Kids Teddy Bear Golf Classic Honors Jonathan Pollack

MICROSOFT YOUTH SPARK GRANT



Celeste Alleyne accepts award on behalf of Microsoft Youthspark

TEDDY BEAR BALL 2014



Teddy Bear Ball Honors Kevin Beggs and Brian & Susan Kennedy

THE COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF HOLIDAY GIVING CAMPAIGN



Deck the Walls at The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®

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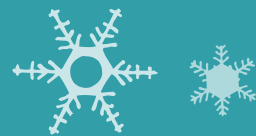
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A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS



Dear Friends,

We're delighted to share this year-end edition of Helpline with you. During the holiday season, it is especially meaningful to highlight some of the special friends and organizations that have supported our efforts to build brighter futures for the children.

2014 has been an exciting year at The Help Group - the opening of our new autism education building in Culver City, the wonderful gatherings of caring and committed friends at our Teddy Bear Ball and Keyes for Kids Golf Classic, and our new major grant from Microsoft, to name just a few. Our thanks also to The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf for lighting up the season with their annual "Deck the Walls" program

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your generosity and support of the children.

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

Best regards,

Gary H. Carmona ~ Dr. Barbara Firestone

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MICROSOFT YOUTHSPARK GRANT IS BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

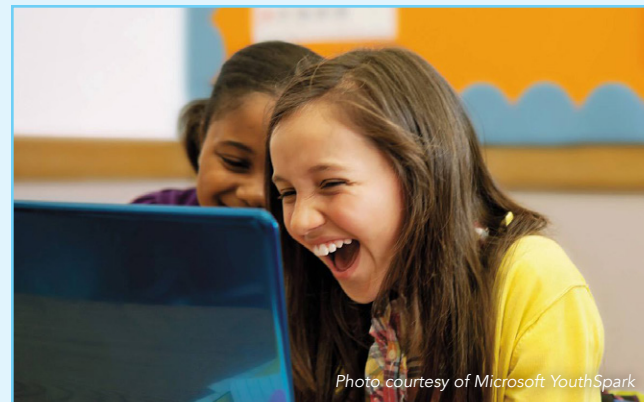


Photo courtesy of Microsoft YouthSpark



Microsoft recognizes the difference technology can make for young people with special needs helping them to more fully develop their school and workplace skill sets. Microsoft YouthSpark awarded The Help Group a most generous \$800,000 product grant for the new "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."

Funding for the new initiative will enable The Help Group to enhance the digital literacy, learning, achievement and preparation for post-secondary education and vocational workplace opportunities for its students. "The lasting benefit of this Microsoft YouthSpark grant will be to provide our students with the enhanced skillsets which will prepare them for positive and productive futures," commented Dr. Barbara Firestone. "The Help Group is immensely grateful to Microsoft for its ongoing partnership and commitment to our children."

The Help Group saluted Microsoft YouthSpark with its Champion for Children Award for its commitment to creating brighter futures for young people at its 2014 Summit Conference. Accepting the award on behalf of Microsoft YouthSpark, Celeste Alleyne, Director, Citizenship & Public Affairs remarked, "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 bridge the opportunity divide for these remarkable young people through technology."

Microsoft established its YouthSpark Program in 2012. A powerful catalyst, YouthSpark is a company-wide initiative that aims to create opportunities for 300 million young people around the world by 2015. A key part of YouthSpark is the work it is doing with nonprofit organizations focused on helping young people access education, employment and entrepreneurship. Microsoft YouthSpark is making a real impact and helping young people prepare for their next steps.

We thank Microsoft for believing in our children and for nurturing their potential!

THE COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF AND THE HELP GROUP: A HOLIDAY TRADITION



Make your next cup of coffee or tea an extra special one for the children of The Help Group. Thanks to the generosity of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf (CBTL), the "Deck the Walls" campaign, now in its 13th year, will support The Help Group's efforts on behalf of children with special needs.

"Everyone at The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf is proud to support The Help Group again this holiday season. The Help Group is a wonderful organization with remarkable dedication to children with special needs and their families," shared John Dawson, President & CEO of The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®

Patrons can participate this holiday season by purchasing one or more \$1 holiday stickers to "Deck the Walls" at their local Coffee Bean. One hundred percent of the holiday sticker purchases will benefit The Help Group. Additionally, for every purchase of a one-pound Holiday Blend

Coffee bag or 20-count Winter Dream Tea tin, The Coffee Bean will donate \$1 to The Help Group. Both holiday giving programs will run through December 30th at CBTL's retail locations in California and the Western United States. The Coffee Bean kicked off the holidays with its annual open houses where customers had the opportunity to purchase specialty holiday drinks for \$1 each, with all sales donated to The Help Group.

"We are most grateful to The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® for once again generously supporting the children of The Help Group, as they have done for 13 years," said Dr. Barbara Firestone. "These holiday campaigns represent the true giving spirit of the season."



The Perfect Blend!

THE HELP GROUP OPENS NEW EDUCATION BUILDING AT ITS CULVER CITY CAMPUS

(Cont from Cover)

hard hats and shovels to break ground on this space, and here we are today in this amazing building to mark its completion."

Help Group Chief Operating Officer Dr. Susan Berman took the podium to acknowledge the vision and leadership of Dr. Firestone in bringing this building to life, "With a keen eye and steadfast determination, Dr. Firestone ensures that our students are in environments that maximize learning, celebrate their strengths and are of the highest caliber."

Celebrity spokesperson Gary Cole, proud father of a Help Group graduate, talked about the positive impact of The Help Group on his daughter's life. "As a parent of a child with special needs, there's so much that's unknown and dark and difficult to understand. I know this new building will be filled with staff who will bring light and hope to children and their families for many years to come."

The unanimous support of the Culver City Council has been critical to The Help Group's efforts to serve more children. City dignitaries including Culver City Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells, former Culver City mayor and Councilmember, Andrew Weissman and Councilmember Jim Clarke and joined the festivities.

Culver City Mayor Sahli-Wells praised The Help Group for its efforts on behalf of the children. "I can never be at The Help Group without being overcome by emotion. Its longstanding commitment to the children is an inspiration to us all." Councilmember Andrew Weissman spoke of how touched he was by the students, "They reinforce the special nature of The Help Group and we're so proud to have an organization like this in Culver City."

Dr. Firestone announced the dedication of "Opening Doors," the Robert Toll sculpture that graces the front of the new building. This remarkable sculpture that speaks to the heart of The Help Group was commissioned by Joy Monkmarsh, Founding Board member in honor of her husband, Jerry Monkmarsh, Founding Board member, and given with love from the Monkmarsh family. Joy was joined by their son, Jonathan and his wife Heidi, their daughter Julie, and four grandchildren Briana, Russell, Jonah and Isaac. Jerry was

integral to the development and expansion of The Help Group's campuses, providing tremendous expertise throughout the years.

"Joy and I both remember how excited Jerry was when I met him at the site that would eventually become our Culver City Campus, asking for his assessment of the viability of our acquiring this property and developing it as a school campus" Dr. Firestone said. "He loved this property and said without hesitation that he could envision a wonderful campus here for the children. He was incredibly supportive of this effort and was thrilled when we decided to construct this building. I cannot begin to tell you how privileged we feel to dedicate this sculpture in Jerry's honor and how grateful we are to Joy and the family for this lasting and wonderful gift." We thank Robert Toll and Louis Neiter, Art Consultant who were so committed to this project.

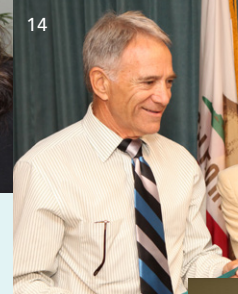
In tribute to Joy and Jerry, longtime Help Group friend Louis Price, former lead singer of the Temptations, performed a stirring rendition of "Stand by Me." Avis Ridley-Thomas, Co-Director of UCLA's Institute for Non-Violence in Los Angeles, shared congratulatory remarks on behalf of her husband, Mark Ridley Thomas, Chairman of the LA County Board of Supervisors. Ms. Ridley-Thomas shared, "I'm really honored to represent my husband today and his efforts on behalf of this community. You all have made tremendous contributions - the artists and architects, the board members, the city council and the mayor - everyone has been part of making this institution what it is today - you are the credits that run after the movie, and my husband and I are proud to be part of that." *

Louis Price and The Help Group's Children's Choir poignantly conveyed the spirit of the afternoon with a medley of "Just the Way You Are" and "I Believe I Can Fly". It was truly a day to remember, when the Help Group family, dignitaries and the children took part in the cutting of the ribbon!

***About Our Building** This state of the art facility is designed for 200 students. It features classrooms outfitted with technology to facilitate interactive learning; a Science Lab, a Media Lab; an Art Studio; an "Innovation" Lab in support of STEM education and an 8000-square foot rooftop recreation area, for physical education, performing arts, and open-air classroom activities and has a play structure for younger students.



RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATION



1. The ribbon is cut on The Help Group's new autism education building 2. Councilmember Andrew Weissman, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells, Councilmember Jim B. Clarke 3. Dr. Barbara Firestone, Gary H. Carmona, Joy Monkmarsh, Louis Price 4. Avis Ridley-Thomas 5. Dr. Susan Berman, Dr. Barbara Firestone with Help Group student 6. Rochelle and Gary H. Carmona 7. Ray & Lorraine Friedman, Dr. Susan Berman 8. Dr. David Firestone, Susan Kennedy 9. Heidi Monkmarsh, Julie Gadinsky, Joy Monkmarsh 10. Gary Cole 11. Help Group students 12. Art Bannick 13. Richard Zelle, Perry Katz 14. Robert Dorman 15. Lois Neiter, Robert Toll 16. The Help Group Ribbon Cutting Celebration 17. Bradley Shahine, Greg Geddes, Randy Kissel 18. Mike and Susan Berk 19. Nata Preis, Pamela Clark

KEYES FOR KIDS TEDDY BEAR GOLF CLASSIC SCORES A HOLE IN ONE FOR THE KIDS! THE 23RD ANNUAL EVENT HONORS JONATHAN POLLACK

It was a day of fun and philanthropy at the 23rd Annual Keyes for Kids Teddy Bear Golf Classic on September 22nd at the Valencia Country Club to benefit the children of The Help Group. The generosity and friendship of everyone who supported this year's Classic made it an over the top success!

Capping off a great day of golf, at the Lockton Insurance Awards Reception, The Help Group presented its Help Fore Children Humanitarian Award to Jonathan Pollack in recognition of his remarkable spirit of philanthropy and his commitment to giving back. Jonathan is the Global Head of Commercial Real Estate and Head of Risk for Structured Finance at Deutsche Bank and a recognized leader in the real estate field.

Golf Co-Chair and 2009 honoree Jesse Sharf, partner & co-chair of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher's Century City Real Estate Department, lent a hand in emceeding the program. He introduced the young people of The Help Group, who performed a musical tribute to Jonathan, and welcomed auctioneer extraordinaire and golf-classic co-chair, Michael Hackman, Founder & CEO of Hackman Capital who conducted a spirited auction with auction items generously donated by Oaktree Capital Management & Michel Rosenfeld of Woodridge Capital Partners, and Keyes Automotive Group.

Jonathan Firestone, Golf Classic Co-Chair, introduced

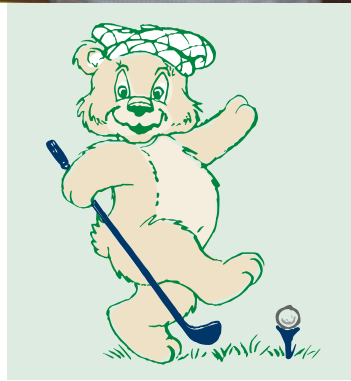


his friend and colleague, 2014 honoree Jonathan Pollack, and thanked him for his remarkable spirit of philanthropy and for supporting of the children of The Help Group. In his acceptance remarks, Jonathan Pollack thanked his friends and colleagues for their outstanding support of The Help Group, "It's an incredible organization that has such a positive impact on the lives of so many kids with special needs. I'm proud to lend a hand to The Help Group's important efforts."

Gary H. Carmona and Dr. Firestone presented the award to Jonathan Pollack. Dr. Firestone remarked, "We are so grateful to Jonathan and Stacy Pollack for extending their hand of friendship to the children of The Help Group, and to Jonathan for scoring a hole-in-one for the kids." She announced the naming of The Pollack Family Innovation Lab in the new education building in Culver City saying, "The lab will give young people cutting-edge, 21st century skills in the areas of STEM education."

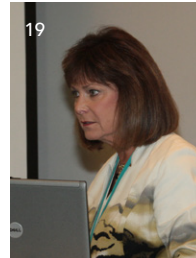
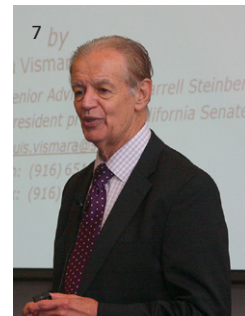
This year's Co-Chairs included John Brady, Managing Director & Portfolio Manager for Oaktree Capital Management; Victor Coleman, Chairman & CEO, Hudson Pacific Properties; Jonathan Firestone, Managing Director, Eastdil Secured; Mark Fluent, Managing Director and Head of CRE Banking, Deutsche Bank Securities; Michael Hackman, Founder & CEO, Hackman Capital; Jonathan Klein, Managing Director of Fortress Investment Group; Michael Rosenfeld, Founder & CEO of Woodridge Capital Partners and 2011 Golf honoree; Jesse Sharf; Judd Swarzman, Judd Swarzman & Associates and Help Group Board member; Howard Tenenbaum, Vice President of Keyes Automotive Group & Help Group Board Executive Vice Chair; and Michael Van Konyenburg, President, Eastdil Secured.

Our many thanks to Jonathan Pollack, Keyes, Lockton, our Golf Classic chairs, sponsors, and participants who helped to make this such an unforgettable day in support of the kids!



1. Jesse Sharf, Kevin Pivnick, Jonathan Klein, Jonathan Pollack, Victor Coleman, Jonathan Firestone, Mark Fluent
2. The Team from Keyes Motors with Dr. Barbara Firestone 3. Jonathan Pollack, Michael May, Jonathan Firestone, Scott Weiner 4. Michael Rosenfeld, Michael May, Jesse Sharf, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Jonathan Pollack, Jonathan Firestone, Jeff Friedman 5. The Team from Lockton Insurance 6. Jonathan Pollack 7. Gary H. Carmona, Jonathan Pollack, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Jonathan Firestone 8. Jesse Sharf 9. Michael Hackman 10. The Help Group Children's Choir 11. Gary H. Carmona, Judd Swarzman 12. Assemblymember Matt Dababneh, Jonathan Pollack

SUMMIT 2014 CONVENES LEADING EXPERTS IN AUTISM • LEARNING DISABILITIES • ADHD



SUMMIT 2014

Summit Chairs

Barbara Firestone, PhD
Peter C. Whybrow, MD
Robert M. Bilder, PhD, ABPP

Featured Speakers

Catherine Lord, PhD
Stephen Hinshaw, PhD
Jack M. Fletcher, PhD

Presenters

Jane Tavyev Asher, MD
Robert Accordino, MD, MSc
Bruce L. Baker, PhD
Jan Blacher, PhD
Cindy Cottier, MA, MEd, CCC-SLP
Pamela Crooke, PhD, CCC-SLP
Diane M. Danis, MD, MPH
Elisha Goldstein, PhD
Stefanie Goldstein, PhD
Patricia Herrera, MS
Elizabeth Laugeson, PsyD
Philip Levin, PhD
James McCracken, MD
David Miklowitz, PhD
Christine Wu Nordahl, PhD
Daniel Openden, PhD, BCBA-D
Karen L. Park, OTD, OTR/L, SWC, CLE
Carolina Peña-Ricardo, MD
Olga Solomon, PhD
Louis A. Vismara, MD
Donna M. Werling, PhD
Louis A. Vismara, MD
Jeffrey Wood, PhD

The Help Group Summit 2014 convened more than 450 guests and 30 leading experts in basic and applied research, and evidence-based best practices in assessment, intervention and treatment. This year's Summit was held on Friday, October 17th and Saturday, October 18th at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. The conference was chaired by Help Group President & CEO, Dr. Barbara Firestone, UCLA Semel Institute Director Dr. Peter C. Whybrow, and Dr. Robert M. Bilder, UCLA-Semel Institute Tennenbaum Center Director and Professor of Psychology, Psychiatry & Biobehavioral Sciences.

Dr. Firestone welcomed guests and opened the morning proceedings. She recognized and thanked Major Sponsors, First 5 California and First 5 LA, and Media Sponsor NBC4 Los Angeles for their support of the Summit. Dr. Firestone also extended her appreciation to this year's speakers for their participation, and for sharing their expertise, insights and new perspectives in their respective fields.

NBC4 news anchor and multiple, award-winning journalist, Colleen Williams served as the Summit Luncheon host. She spoke of NBC4's commitment to covering important stories that promote the health and well-being of children, and features that relate to children with special needs, including the rising numbers of children being diagnosed and key public policy stories from Sacramento – from the passage and extension of the California autism

insurance mandate to the recent extension of the California Highway Patrol Silver Alert system for missing persons and its inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Summit co-chair, Dr. Bilder, shared with guests the mutual pride that he and Dr. Whybrow have in the innovative partnerships UCLA has with The Help Group. He also spoke of his predecessor, Dr. Paul Satz, in whose memory the conference is dedicated each year.

Ms. Williams introduced The Help Group's Champion for Children Award honoree, the Microsoft YouthSpark Program. Gary H. Carmona, Help Group Board Chairman and Dr. Firestone presented the award. "The Help Group is immensely grateful to Microsoft for its ongoing partnership and commitment to our children," remarked Dr. Firestone. "Today it is our privilege to recognize Microsoft YouthSpark for its extraordinary efforts in support of the young people at The Help Group and young people worldwide."

Celeste Alleyne, Microsoft's Citizenship & Public Affairs Director and US Education Lead, accepted the award on behalf of Microsoft YouthSpark, and remarked on the difference technology can make to improve the lives of young people. "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 bridge the opportunity divide for these remarkable young people through technology." (See Related Story, Page 3.)

At the conclusion of the luncheon program, Dr. Firestone presented Ms. Williams with artwork from the children of The Help Group in recognition of NBC4's commitment to the children and families of the Los Angeles community.

The conference autism keynote speaker, Dr. Catherine Lord, highlighted emerging perspectives in autism, in addition to findings from her longitudinal study looking at children with ASD from the ages 2 to 22 and developmental trajectories and factors contributing to outcomes in adolescents and young adults. The ADHD Keynote speaker, Dr. Stephen Hinshaw presented findings published in his recent book, "The ADHD Explosion: Myths, Medication, Money and Today's Push for Performance" and discussed the fast-rising prevalence of ADHD, the roles of genes and heritable risk, in addition to other biological risk factors and the psychosocial forces, including parenting and school pressures in relation to the prevalence and manifestations of ADHD. Learning Disability Keynote, Dr. Jack Fletcher provided an extensive overview on the strengths and weaknesses of identification methods for LD and the role of cognitive assessments for identification and intervention.

Our thanks to all who helped to make this event such a great success!

1. Dr. Peter Whybrow, Dr. Robert Bilder, Dr. Barbara Firestone 2. Colleen Williams 3. Dr. Catherine Lord 4. Dr. Stephen Hinshaw 5. Dr. Jack Fletcher 6. Dr. James McCracken 7. Dr. Louis Vismara 8. Dr. Olga Solomon 9. Dr. David Miklowitz 10. Celeste Alleyne, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Gary H. Carmona 11. Colleen Williams, Dr. Susan Berman 12. Dr. Robert Accordino 13. Dr. Bruce Baker, Dr. Jan Blacher 14. Dr. Philip Levin, Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson 15. Dr. Daniel Openden 16. Dr. Diane Danis 17. Dr. Pamela Crooke 18. Dr. Carolina Peña-Ricardo 19. Ms. Cindy Cottier 20. Dr. Karen Park 21. Dr. Christine Wu Nordahl 22. Ms. Patricia Herrera 23. Dr. Donna M. Werling

MAJOR SPONSORS



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THE 17TH ANNUAL TEDDY BEAR BALL HONORS LIONSGATE'S KEVIN BEGGS AND BRIAN & SUSAN KENNEDY

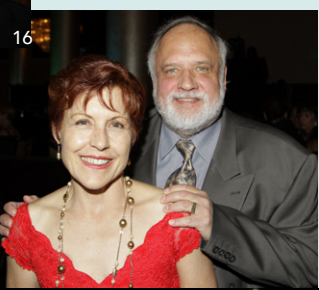
The Help Group's 17th Annual Teddy Bear Ball was an evening filled with good will and philanthropy as hundreds of friends and supporters gathered in the International Ballroom at The Beverly Hilton Hotel on Wednesday, April 23rd. The Help Group presented its Help Humanitarian Award to Kevin Beggs, Chairman of Lionsgate Television Group, in recognition of his outstanding humanitarian spirit and his commitment to children with special needs. Brian Kennedy of Regency Outdoor Advertising and his wife Susan received the Corporate Philanthropy Award for their many years of support of The Help Group's efforts.

Lionsgate's Chief Executive Officer, Jon Feltheimer, Vice Chairman, Michael Burns, Chief Operating Officer, Sandra Stern, and actor-comedian George Lopez served as Gala Chairs. Gala Co-Chairs were Jamie & Chris McGurk, David Salzman, and Ken Solomon. Major sponsors included Lionsgate, Harry Winston, Inc., Regency Outdoor Advertising, CBS, Keyes Automotive Group, Bumble and bumble, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf®, and Variety.

Louis Price, former lead singer of the Temptations, and The Help Group Children's Choir, opened the show with a rousing rendition of "Happy." Actor Jason Alexander served as emcee for the evening and welcomed guests, "We hold a special place in our hearts for children with autism and their families."

Gary H. Carmona, Help Group Board Chair and Dr. Barbara Firestone thanked everyone for their generous support and commitment to the young people of The Help Group. "Your generosity will light up the lives of many children long after tonight's finale," said Dr. Firestone.

Dr. Firestone introduced Corporate Philanthropy Award honorees Brian Kennedy of Regency Outdoor Advertising and his wife Susan. Regency Outdoor has generously sponsored citywide Help Group multi-billboard campaigns for many years that have reached countless families with the message of hope and help. In his remarks, Mr. Kennedy credited Susan, a teacher who worked in special education early



in her career, for suggesting they donate billboards to The Help Group. "It's been 36 years since Susan suggested that we donate billboards to the schools -- over 2,400 hundred billboards have gone up in that time. We're so proud of Barbara and The Help Group. It's been incredible to see The Help Group grow over the years and expand to serve even more children. Regency is blessed to be your partner."

The multi-talented actor-singer Charles Esten, of the television show "Nashville," opened the second half of the evening with "Playin' Tricks," a fan favorite, followed by a heartwarming performance of "A Life That's Good" that captured the spirit of the evening.

Ms. Stern, Chief Operating Officer, Lionsgate Television Group and long-time Help Group friend introduced Help Humanitarian Award honoree Mr. Beggs. "What truly sets Kevin apart is his compassion, his humanitarian leadership and his commitment to make the world a better place." Presenting the award to Kevin, Dr. Firestone remarked, "Kevin, you are a man of great heart, of great compassion and caring - who fundamentally believes in the beauty and potential of all children.

You know that it takes a village to raise a child, and you're such a leader in building those villages of compassion. So from the bottom of my heart and The Help Group's heart, we want to say thank you for warmly embracing the children of The Help Group and we are honored by your support and your participation. Thank you very much."

Kevin shared, "I had the privilege of spending a morning at The Help Group's Sherman Oaks campus. I will never forget the children and young people that I met, each with his or her own unique story -- and each surrounded by caring, loving teachers, therapists and administrators that create both the structure and the freedom that enable them to flourish."

For the grand finale, the honorees and celebrity guests joined the children of The Help Group onstage to sing Katy Perry's "Firework" -- a spectacular ending to a wonderful night!

1. Dr. Barbara Firestone, Brian Kennedy, Susan Kennedy, Kevin Beggs, Gary H. Carmona 2. Charles Esten, Sandra Stern, Kevin Beggs, Jon Feltheimer, Jason Issacs, Eric Close 3. Sandra Stern, Jason Alexander 4. Dianna Lau, Jon Feltheimer, Kevin Beggs 5. Laurie Adorno, Susan Moseley 6. Ken Solomon, Dick Costello 7. Help Group student Nikili, Dr. Susan Berman 8. Martin Lawrence, Roberta Moradfar 9. Charles Esten 10. Gary H. Carmona, Joy Monkarsh 11. Howard and Jodi Tenenbaum 12. Chris & Jamie McGurk 13. Celeste Alleyne, Curtis Silver 14. Alyssa Kennedy, Susan and Brian Kennedy, Ashley Vallance 15. Mike and Susan Berk 16. Peggy and Barry Nagoshiner 17. Sonia & David Salzman 18. Help Group student Preston, Louis Price 19. The Help Group Children's Choir

THE HELP GROUP AND USC OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE DIVISION FORM A NEW PARTNERSHIP

The Help Group is pleased to announce an innovative partnership between The Help Group and the University of Southern California (USC) Mrs. T.H. Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy. The Help Group – USC Occupational Science Initiative is dedicated to developing evidence-based intervention programs for children with autism spectrum disorder through an interdisciplinary team of researchers, educators and clinicians.



Dr. Olga Solomon

The collaboration was established to better identify how animal-assisted intervention can be integrated into a curriculum that meets the educational and therapeutic needs of students in The Help Group's five autism schools. "With the success of our Paws and Pals program, we recognized the benefits of having volunteers and their therapy dogs visiting our classrooms and interacting with children across the autism spectrum," said Dr. Barbara Firestone. "The Initiative holds great promise as one of the first of its kind to demonstrate how therapy animals can be utilized to help to facilitate social behavior and communication in children and teens with autism."

Leading the effort on behalf of USC is Dr. Olga Solomon, Assistant Professor at USC's Division of Occupational Science and Therapy Dr. Solomon, a 2014 Summit presenter, also led a Distinguished Lecture Series presentation at The Help Group on "Animal-Assisted Therapy in Classroom and Clinical Settings"

to provide practical strategies for including therapy dogs in a school setting. Joining The Help Group, under the mentorship of Dr. Solomon, is Occupational Science and Therapy Doctoral Resident, Allie Tickin.

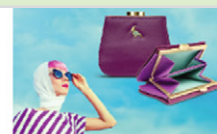
A program development and evaluation project is already underway this academic year at The Help Group. Therapy dog-handler teams are working in coordination with therapists and educators to develop animal-assisted activities for five to seven year-old students with mild cognitive delays and social and communicative challenges.

The Initiative is The Help Group's third partnership with a leading research university. In 1999, The Help Group partnered with the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior to create The Help Group Neuropsychology program, and once again in 2007, to form the groundbreaking Help Group – UCLA Autism Research Alliance.

Dr. Firestone, "We are delighted to join with USC on this cutting-edge initiative to expand research into animal-assisted intervention and look forward to a productive collaboration to foster growth and progress for young people with autism."



COLORI BOUTIQUE MAKES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON BRIGHTER FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE HELP GROUP



Shop this holiday season and throughout the year at Colori, and a portion of the proceeds of all sales will benefit The Help Group

The Help Group invites its friends to make a difference by "shopping for good" this holiday season and throughout the year at Colori Boutique. Colori founder and owner Lori Samuels has generously donated a portion of all sales at her boutique to The Help Group since she opened her store in 2012. Located on Mission Street in San Marino, Colori offers a colorful, fashionable array of jewelry, business and organizational accessories. Its new, One Odd Bird, luxury leather line features a collection of personal and professional leather accessories.

Lori explains, "Colori is a place where I can share my favorite finds from my trips around Italy while indulging my passion for helping children. The

store gives me the opportunity to shine a bright light on The Help Group and the children and families it serves. By donating a percentage of every sale at Colori to The Help Group, I hope I can make the life of a child with special needs a little more colorful."

Dr. Barbara Firestone expressed her thanks to Lori for her ongoing commitment to the children. "During the holiday season, our thoughts turn to gratitude and appreciation for friends like Lori who do so much all year long to support our efforts on behalf of children with special needs."

To learn more about Colori, please visit www.colori-usa.com and the new line One Odd Bird, www.oneoddbird.com

THROUGH OUR EYES ART EXHIBIT CELEBRATES YOUNG ARTISTS

The Help Group and Bear Givers were proud to present the fifth annual student art show "Through Our Eyes: A Celebration of Young Artists." Bear Givers, a New York-based nonprofit organization, has generously sponsored the show for the last five years through its EmpowerArt Program for children.

The 2014 exhibit was held in the main gallery of the JNA Gallery at Bergamot Station Arts Center in Santa Monica. Artwork created by the students of The Help Group's Village Glen and Bridgeport Schools was on display June 6th through June 13th. All proceeds from the sale of the artwork benefited the schools' arts programs.

Bear Givers Founder and Chairman Joseph Sprung and Diane Lempert, Bear Givers President, attended the reception for the students and their families held on Sunday afternoon, June 8th. Joe shared, "We're thrilled



Bear Givers Joseph Sprung, Diane Lempert, Help Group artists and families.

from her high school years."

Dr. Barbara Firestone congratulated the young artists, "We're very proud of our 97 artists whose impressive artwork is featured in this year's show. Our deepest thanks to Bear Givers for your ongoing commitment to nurturing our students' talent and creativity."

to be here today to celebrate these incredible young artists and their families. To see their pride and sense of accomplishment as they talk about their creations is very moving."

Throughout the afternoon, the gallery was filled with parents, siblings and extended family members of the artists. One parent commented, "This is my daughter's 5th year participating in the art show. It's been wonderful to see her confidence grow every year. This art show will always be one of our favorite memories



2014 MUSIC FOR AUTISM CONCERT SEASON DELIGHTS AUDIENCES



This is the fourth year The Help Group has been a partner with Music for Autism, a dynamic organization that raises public awareness and enriches lives through autism-friendly musical interactive concerts developed specifically for individuals with autism and their families.

The 2014 concert series kicked off in May with a performance by New York-based singer/songwriter Cassandra Kubinski. Cassandra also has a special place in her heart for young people with autism. Her song "Not So Different," helps raise awareness and funds for the autism community through donating sales of the song, live performances, and offering the song for use by autism groups worldwide.

In July, Broadway met Disney when performers Mitch Kaplan, Dianne Fraser, Joanne O'Brien and Denise Fraser brought the magic of Disney songs to The Help Group with "Mostly Disney."

And in October, the magic of Broadway once again came to Sherman Oaks when four members from the national tour of PIPPIN came to The Help Group. The show featured musical director Ryan Cantwell, and cast members Sklyer Adams, Kristine Reese, and Sabrina Harper who performed songs from the award-winning show. We were delighted to have Dr. Robert Accordino, the US founder of Music for Autism, and Laura Lazer join us from New York for this special occasion.

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Advance LA resilience CONFERENCE 2014

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Preparing young adults with autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, Asperger's Disorder, executive functioning challenges, and other social or emotional issues to transition to college, the workforce, and beyond can be challenging for the young person, their family and professionals working with them. The Help Group's Advance LA 2014 Conference, titled "Resilience," presented cutting-edge research and interventions that focused on easing this transition process. The sold-out event was held at American Jewish University on Friday, May 2nd, 2014.

The Resilience Conference featured fourteen nationally recognized and leading experts in their respective fields from universities throughout the country, including Keynote Speaker Dr. Andrew Shatté and presenters Dr. James McCracken, Dr. Peter Gerhardt, Erica R. Holding, BCBA-D, Dr. Elisha Goldstein, Dr. Stefanie Goldstein, Dr. Craig Surman, Dr. Carol Schall, Dr. Vicki Zakrzewski, Dr. Mark Katz, Dr. Jane Thierfeld Brown, Dr. Amy-Jane Griffiths, Dr. Sarita Freedman and Dr. Lindsey Sterling.

In his Keynote Address, Dr. Shatté shared his thoughts on the conference's theme, "Resilience is a crucial ingredient – perhaps the crucial ingredient – to a happy, healthy life. More than anything else, it's what determines how high we rise above what threatens to wear us down."

Conference sessions later in the day addressed topics such as mindfulness, learning how to thrive with ADHD, pharmaceutical



from left, Jill Rosenberg, Dr. Susan Burman, Rabbi Naomi Levy, Nancy Rosenfelt and Dr. Barbara Firestone

management for young adults, transitioning to independence and employment, sexuality education and many more topics of interest. The Luncheon Program honored Nancy Rosenfelt with the 2014 Advancing Awareness Award in recognition of her longstanding and heartfelt dedication and commitment to students with learning differences as Director of Summit View Schools (see related article, page 17), and Rabbi Naomi Levy with the 2014 Resilience Award for her message of hope and resilience as described in her book "Hope Will Find You."

"Our thanks to this year's presenters for providing such an informative and thought-provoking program for the parents and professionals who attended the Resilience Conference," said Jill Rosenberg, Director of Advance LA. "Our conference participants expressed that they left at the end of the day feeling positive, hopeful and inspired to support young adults with diverse needs maximize their potential."

For more information on Advance LA's transition services, please visit www.advancela.org or call 818-779-5198.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY HONORS THE HELP GROUP



Deputy Kathleen Austria, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Commissioner Janet A. Neal, Dr. Susan Berman, Dr. Karen Enyedy (L-R top row), Pamela Clark, Sue Anne Kaples (L-R bottom row)

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities saluted The Help Group with its Access Award for its commitment to helping young people with special needs fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives. The Commission's Access Award Reception was held on Monday, October 20th, in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, a true champion for children with special needs and their families, was proud to nominate The Help Group for this award that was presented by Deputy Kathleen Austria. The Supervisor congratulated The Help Group with a commendation for its exceptional commitment and dedicated public service to children.



Dr. Barbara Firestone accepted this honor on behalf of The Help Group. "I'm so proud to accept this award on behalf of the children and families whom we serve and who are a constant source of inspiration for all that we do." In her remarks, she praised the many organizations and individuals being honored that day, "We all know that it takes a village to raise a child with special needs. We are so honored to be part of this village who care deeply about providing opportunities for young people with disabilities – helping them to address and overcome the challenges in their lives – to make their journey easier, and to look forward to brighter futures."

The Help Group extends its appreciation to The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, as well as to The Commission on Disabilities, for all that they do to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

THE HELP GROUP'S Advance's DAY FOR YOUNG ADULTS



★ Advance LA's 2014 Day for Young Adults was a great success. Held on Saturday, July 19th at AJU in Los Angeles, the one-of-a-kind event, designed specifically for teens and young adults, featured interactive workshops that provided attendees with the opportunity to interact with their peers while learning and practicing transition skills, sparking passions and cultivating new relationships.

cream social and dance party gave participants a festive way to end the afternoon. Over 50 parents joined one of the two support groups offered during the day and shared their experiences and ideas for future Advance LA programs. Parents seemed to enjoy connecting with each other as well. "What an awesome event today! My son really enjoyed himself. I learned quite a bit, too, and was also able to help some other parents," commented one parent.

The Day for Young Adults proved once again to be a meaningful experience for older teens and young adults. The attendees left the day with smiles on their faces, phone numbers of new friends and an array of useful tools to foster their independence.

The event drew 115 young adult attendees, ages 16 to 29 years old. Participants enjoyed engaging workshops on topics like college preparation, job hunting, and dating, as well as exploring activities like robotics, anime and yoga and learning new tools for managing stress and staying healthy. The ice

VILLAGE GLEN SCHOOL RECEIVES HIGHEST ACCREDITATION FROM WASC

This summer The Help Group's Village Glen School received the highest level of accreditation from The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the leading accrediting commission for schools in the United States, at both its Sherman Oaks and Culver City campuses. WASC only awards this prestigious accreditation when it recognizes that a school has met "rigorous, research-based standards that reflect the essential elements of a quality and effective school and can demonstrate engagement in as well as the capacity to provide continuous school improvement."



Village Glen serves students with social and communicative challenges, including autism spectrum disorder and non-verbal learning disabilities. Its innovative college preparatory promotes strong academic achievement and social and personal well-being. In its report, the WASC Visiting Commission noted many exceptional aspects of Village Glen. Dr. Valene Staley, Chairperson of the Commission, said, "Please accept

our congratulations on the quality of instruction being offered in your school and your commitment to school improvement."

Pamela Clark, The Help Group's Director of Autism Schools, reflected on this accomplishment, "What an honor for Village Glen School to achieve this outstanding outcome from the WASC

accreditation process. We earned this superior level of accreditation thanks to the dedicated team of administrators, teachers, staff and parents who all work together to create and foster academic excellence for the students."

While the accreditation was awarded through 2020, WASC is an ongoing process, and Village Glen aims to maintain its high academic standards. "Our primary goal is to enable young people to reach their fullest academic potential, and to continue on to reach their educational goals after graduation," said Ms. Clark.



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WINTER BREAK DAY CAMPS for Children and Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder & other Special Needs

VILLAGE GLEN CAMP

AGES 3-21
LOCATIONS and CONTACTS

The Help Group's Sherman Oaks Campus
Please contact Nicole Webb at nwebb@thehelpgroup.org | 818.778.7136

The Help Group's Culver City Campus
Please contact Tracy Peters at tpeters@thehelpgroup.org | 310.751.1486
www.kidslkemela.org | www.thehelpgroup.org

CAMP SUNSHINE

TEENS on the go!



SUMMIT VIEW SCHOOL SAYS GOODBYE TO LONGTIME DIRECTOR AND WELCOMES NEW HEAD OF SCHOOL



Dr. Barbara Firestone, Nancy Rosenfelt, Dr. Susan Berman

In recent months, Summit View School has bid farewell to longtime Head Nancy Rosenfelt and welcomed a new Head of School, Keri Borzello. Nancy retired in June after 17 years of dedicated service to the children, families and staff of Summit View School. At a reception to pay tribute to Nancy's wonderful work at The Help Group, Dr. Barbara Firestone said, "Nancy is a truly remarkable educator whose leadership has placed Summit View at the vanguard of its field. Her lasting commitment and expertise, her irrepressible warmth, positive spirit, and endless energy, has touched the lives of countless children and families."

Summit View's new Head of School is Keri Borzello, who brings a wealth of relevant experience to this position. In addition to her several years in an administrative role at Westmark School, Keri most recently served as the Principal of Pinewood School in Los Altos, CA where she was highly regarded by faculty and administration, as well as the students and their families.

"Keri's professionalism, dynamic spirit, enthusiasm and high standards of excellence will provide Summit View with the guidance and support it needs to continue to maximize opportunities for student success," remarked Help Group


Chief Operating Officer Dr. Susan Berman. "With a 95% college acceptance rate, Summit View is clearly making a significant difference in the lives of young people with learning differences."

Summit View offers a WASC-accredited college preparatory program to students who possess average to above-average intellectual capabilities. A commitment to maximizing each student's potential forms the foundation of the school's educational program, which is designed to ensure student success, focusing on self-advocacy and skills they can use throughout their lives. With small class sizes and teachers holding California credentials in the area of mild/moderate learning disabilities, Summit View strives to create self-reliant learners. Highly qualified staff provide interactive lessons using the latest in technology, hands-on activities, as well as the most up-to-date instructional materials.

"The year is off to a terrific start with a multitude of events and activities, including experiential learning trips for our juniors and seniors, a competitive fall athletic season, a variety of social events, professional development opportunities for our staff, and our first-ever Super Saturday event on our Westside campus – a day devoted to community service," said Ms. Borzello. "Students, parents and faculty alike have made me feel right at home, and I appreciate their continuous support and enthusiasm. I couldn't be more thrilled to be a new member of the Summit View family."



Keri Borzello



Advance LA's 2015 Conference
SAVE THE DATE
FRIDAY, MAY 1ST

Announcing our Keynote Speaker
Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D.
The Myths of Happiness: What Should Make You Happy, but Doesn't, What Shouldn't Make You Happy, but Does (Penguin Press).

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Leading the Way for Young People with SPECIAL NEEDS



- Village Glen School
- Bridgeport School
- Bridgeport Vocational Education Center
- Young Learners Preschool
- Summit View School
- North Hills Prep
- Parkhill School
- Sunrise School

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 spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays, abuse and emotional problems.

The Help Group's ten specialized day schools offer pre-K through high school programs for more than 1,550 students. Its broad range of mental health and therapy services, child abuse and residential programs extends its reach to more than 6,000 children and their families each year. With more than 980 staff members, The Help Group's state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on seven campuses in the Los Angeles area.

- ASSESSMENT
- MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
- RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS
- 18+ PROGRAMS
- COACHING
- SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING
- PARENT EDUCATION
- AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT
- DAY CAMPS

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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

Village Glen School for students with Asperger's Disorder, high-functioning autism and nonverbal learning disabilities. **The Pace Program** is available for gifted students and offers honors and AP classes. **The Beacon Program** educates students with behavioral challenges.

Young Learners Preschool for Autism for children ages 2.9 to 5 years with autism spectrum disorder.

Bridgeport School for students 5 to 22 with mild to moderate cognitive delays and challenges with social communication and/or language development.

Bridgeport Vocational Education Center serves young adults ages 18 to 22 and bridges the gap between high school and adult independence.

Sunrise School serves students ages 5 to 22 with moderate to severe global delays associated with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities.

Summit View School for students with learning differences who possess average to above-average intellectual capabilities.

The Help Group's Westview serves students with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit and/or mild emotional and social issues.

The Help Group's North Hills Prep offers a WASC-accredited college preparatory curriculum while supporting and challenging creative learners in a nurturing and inclusive community.

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

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; 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.

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 i.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 Resale 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.

18 + PROGRAMS

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

Live. Advance. LA. offers a supported living experience on a college campus for young adults ages 18 to 29 who are learning the skills needed to transition to independence.

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

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & RESEARCH

The Help Group - UCLA Neuropsychology Program provides neuropsychological assessments and consultations for children, adolescents and young adults and enriches the field of knowledge through its research and educational endeavors.

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.

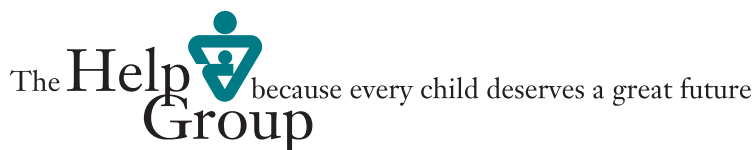
The Help Group - USC Occupational Science Initiative is dedicated to developing evidence-based intervention programs for children with ASD through an interdisciplinary team of researchers, educators and clinicians.

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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 spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays, abuse and emotional problems.

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The Help Group is widely 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 efforts is the commitment to helping young people fulfill their potential to lead positive, productive and rewarding lives.

- Village Glen School · Bridgeport School
- Bridgeport Vocational Education Center · Sunrise School
- Young Learners Preschool for Autism · Project Six
- The Help Group - UCLA Autism Research Alliance · Advance LA · Live.Advance.LA.
- The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Kids Like Me Recreational Programs & Camps · club l.a./club l.a. TEEN
- Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism
- Silverlining Resale Boutique & Vocational Training Center
- Summit View School · Westview · North Hills Prep · Parkhill School
- The Help Group - UCLA Neuropsychology Program
- The Help Group Child & Family Center
- The Help Group - USC Occupational Science Initiative

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www.thehelpgroup.org  

For more information on these and other events, please call
 818.779.5212 or visit www.thehelpgroup.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



Teddy Bear Tea
 Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills
 February 9, 2015



Teddy Bear Ball
 The Beverly Hilton Hotel
 April 22, 2015



Advance LA Conference
 The Science of Happiness:
 Purpose. Connection. Optimism. Grit
 American Jewish University
 May 1, 2015



Teddy Bear Golf
 Valencia Country Club
 September 28, 2015



The Help Group SUMMIT 2015
 Advances and Best Practices in
 Autism · Learning · Disabilities · ADHD
 Skirball Cultural Center
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