

THE HELP GROUP'S GOLF CLASSIC PRESENTED BY EASTDIL SECURED TO HONOR MICHAEL HACKMAN



Michael Hackman

"We are thrilled to salute Michael for his humanitarian spirit and for being such an incredible friend to The Help Group and to the children. The Help Group is most grateful to Michael, Eastdil Secured, and the Golf Classic Chairs for their philanthropic leadership and tremendous efforts on behalf of our young people."



The Golf Classic will take place on Monday, September 16th at Valencia Country Club. This event will surely be a great day on the greens, and is already a sold-out, over-the-top success! To all those who have supported this year's Golf Classic – thank you for your generosity and caring.

(Cont'd on page 3)

THE HELP GROUP'S **STEM³** ACADEMY OPENS THIRD CAMPUS IN ORANGE COUNTY



This fall, The Help Group's STEM³ Academy, the only K-12 school in the nation to provide STEM curriculum to students with social and learning differences, opened its third campus in Irvine; it's first school in Orange County.

Under the umbrella of The Help Group – the largest, most innovative nonprofit of its kind serving children and young adults with special needs – STEM³ Academy is able to provide students with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, and other social and learning differences the opportunity to maximize their potential.

Many students with social and learning differences have a passion for STEM fields and thrive while engaged in project-based learning. STEM³ Academy customizes its approach and curriculum to each student's individual strengths and needs. It offers robust science, technology, engineering and mathematics courses, as well as opportunities for students to fully explore the humanities. The hub of our school is a state of the art innovation lab and maker space where students are involved in diverse pursuits such as robotics, electronics, film, audio mixing, and 3D modeling and printing using a variety of high-tech equipment.

With a growing need for qualified STEM talent in Southern California and across the nation, STEM³ Academy prepares students for meaningful careers in a variety of fields, such as engineering, cyber-security, biomedical, coding, game development, accounting, web design, IT and the humanities. The school leverages partnerships and mentor programs with leading businesses to offer students real-world interaction and a first-hand knowledge of potential career paths.

(Cont'd on page 4)

THE HELP GROUP LAUNCHES KALEIDOSCOPE – A GROUNDBREAKING LGBTQ+ SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR YOUTH



The Help Group recently launched one of its newest and exciting programs—Kaleidoscope, serving LGBTQ+ children, adolescents, young adults, and their families. While Kaleidoscope serves all LGBTQ+ individuals, it also specializes in working with LGBTQ+ individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, LD and social and emotional challenges and their families.

The Help Group received generous support for Kaleidoscope from an anonymous philanthropic donor. We are truly grateful for this donation as it will provide us with the opportunity to impact the lives of so many more young people in our community. Kaleidoscope supports LGBTQ+ young people and their families in

(Cont'd on page 5)

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A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

We are so delighted to share this summer edition of the HelpLine with you.

To date, 2019 has been such an exciting year for The Help Group! We are proud to announce the opening of our third STEM³

Academy, serving K-12 Grades, and The Help Group Learning Center, providing a K-12 tailored education curriculum to homeschooled students, on our newest campus in Irvine. And, we recently launched Kaleidoscope – a groundbreaking program that serves LGBTQ+ young people including those who have autism and other special needs. This summer, Kaleidoscope was gifted a most generous donation from an anonymous philanthropic donor.

It is our great pleasure to announce that distinguished Golf Chair and longtime friend of The Help Group, Michael Hackman, Chief Executive Officer of Hackman Capital Partners, will be honored at the The Help Group's Teddy Bear Golf Classic presented by Eastdil Secured – an event that will surely be an over-the-top success.

This issue of HelpLine spotlights our Teddy Bear Ball, a very special evening honoring Steve Stark, President of TV and Development at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. This past March, The Help Group's Summit View School hosted a record-breaking "comedy show" fundraiser, hosted by Sherri Shepherd and headlined by many well-known comics. Other highlights include: Autism Awareness Month, our arts programs, a nationally awarded ACEing Autism essay, Special Olympics, the Advance LA Conference, the 10th Annual Festival of Arts Sponsored by Bear Givers, and our various graduations.

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

Best Regards,

Gary H. Carmona ~ Dr. Barbara Firestone

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**THE HELP GROUP'S
TEDDY BEAR GOLF CLASSIC**
HONORING
MICHAEL HACKMAN



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH

Valencia Country Club



GOLF CLASSIC CHAIRS



Jay Borzi



John Brady



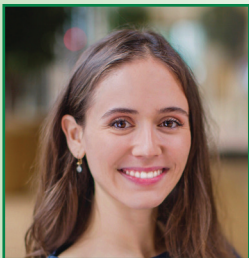
Victor Coleman



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Stuart Graiwer



Gabrielle Hackman



Brent Ilouliau



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**Michael Van
Konynenburg**



Peter Weidman



Jeffrey Worth

For more information visit www.thehelpgroup.org or call 818.779.5212



THE HELP GROUP'S **stem³** ACADEMY OPENS THIRD CAMPUS IN ORANGE COUNTY (CONT'D FROM COVER)

THE HELP GROUP'S

stem³ academy

outside the box: students, learning, results

Code your own path

Valley Glen | Culver City | Irvine—Now Open!



(cont'd from cover)

"We're thrilled to bring our teaching approach to Orange County and work with students and families to drive their passions into meaningful careers and help them flourish by working with them in ways that are meaningful to their unique minds," said Dr. Ellis Crasnow, Director of STEM³ Academy and STEM Education at The Help Group. "We've seen tremendous growth and success at our campuses in Los Angeles, with students graduating and entering top-notch universities such as Loyola Marymount, Parsons School of Design, UC Berkeley and Cal Poly Pomona. We couldn't be more proud and look forward to the same successes from our new Irvine campus."

The Help Group's Very Special Innovation Fair will also be headed to Orange County on October 12. This is a free, family-friendly showcase of discovery and imagination that is equal parts science fair, high-tech exhibition, art show, and community carnival.

To learn more about the expansion, events, and summer camp, visit: www.stem3academy.org/orangecounty

Applications for the 2019-2020 school year in Orange County are being accepted now: www.stem3academy.org/application/

1) (L-R) Dr. Ellis Crasnow, Director of STEM Education, The Help Group; Tom Komp, LCSW, Senior Vice President, The Help Group; Dr. Susan Berman, Chief Operating Officer, The Help Group; Dr. Diane Flannery, Senior Director of Design & Strategy, The Help Group; Dr. Jason Bolton – Vice President of Programs, The Help Group; Oscar Valadez, Senior Director, Finance/Operations, The Help Group; Dr. Lisa Reid, Principal of STEM³ Academy & Administrator of The Help Group Learning Center 2) Dr. Ellis Crasnow speaks at an Open House event in Irvine.



The Help Group's

kaleidoscope

Affirming support for all LGBTQ+ young people and their families

Serving all
LGBTQ+ young
people including
those who are
neurodiverse



(cont'd from cover)

building healthy relationships, strong social connections, and a wide range of life skills to help them realize their unique potential.

According to Dr. Susan Berman, COO of The Help Group, "With a growing number of LGBTQ+ young people, including those with special needs who are seeking a safe place to connect with peers and explore their emerging identity, it was clear that there was a pressing community need for a program such as this. Believing that strengths in differences make the world a better place, and believing that all LGBTQ+ individuals should have access to a full complement of services, Kaleidoscope was born."

Kaleidoscope will offer the following: social events, social clubs, and a drop-in center providing safe spaces for all; individual, group, and family support; vocational assessment and training; job opportunities at The Help Group's newest social enterprise – Silverlining – a resale store and café; sensitivity training to increase awareness and acceptance, and resources and referrals to meet differing needs.

According to Bryan Scheihing, LMFT and Director of Kaleidoscope, "It's important to recognize that LGBTQ+ youth are facing unique challenges. Those challenges are more complex when combined with social and learning differences – "a double rainbow." Understanding and accepting that each child, teen and young adult has a unique story is critical in providing more specialized support for this population."



(L-R) Elin Bradley, Director of Therapeutic Schools and Residential Treatment At The Help Group, Laura Harwood, Instructional Aide, at The Help Group's STEM³ Academy, Bryan Scheihing, LMFT and Director of Kaleidoscope at The Help Group.



Bryan Scheihing at the Kaleidoscope booth at The Help Group's Special Needs Resource Fair

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THE HELP GROUP PRESENTS

SUMMIT 2019

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Friday, October 25 &
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THE HELP GROUP'S ANNUAL SUMMIT VIEW SCHOOL FUNDRAISER "COMEDY SHOW" – A RECORD-BREAKING SUCCESS



(L-R): Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group COO, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO, Dr. Jason Bolton, Help Group Vice President, Keri Borzello, Head of The Summit View School at The Help Group
Second Row (L-R): Kevin Nealon, George Lopez, Sherri Shepherd, Louis Anderson, Wanda Sykes, Billy Gardell, Tammy Pescatelli

On Sunday March 31st, The Help Group's Summit View School hosted its annual fundraiser, which was an over-the-top success for our students and families. This year's fundraiser – called "The Comedy Show" – was hosted by Summit View parent, Emmy-award winning actor, comic, NY Times best-selling author and former co-anchor of ABC's *The View*, Sherri Shepherd.

The night boasted several well-known comic headliners like Louie Anderson, star and Emmy-award winner for best supporting actor in the hit FX show *Baskets*, Billy Gardell, Star of the CBS hit show, *Mike & Molly*, George Lopez, star of *The George Lopez Show*, Kevin Nealon, best known as one of the longest-running cast members on NBC's *Saturday Night Live* and current cast member of *Man with a Plan*, Tammy Pescatelli, winner of Comedy Central's Stand-up Showdown and star of the Netflix special *Finding the Funny*, Wanda Sykes, Emmy-award winning writer on *The Chris Rock Show* and co-star of *The New Adventures of Old Christine*.

"Summit View is such a special and wonderful school, and I'm very passionate about it because of my son Jeffrey who is a student there. Summit View helps students become confident, and see that they matter, and the funds raised help them thrive and grow," said Sherri Shepard.

In addition to the evening's line-up of comedy all-stars, the festivities featured a silent auction.

Keri Borzello, Head of Summit View School, remarked, "We are incredibly grateful to Sherri Shepherd and the fantastic group of A-List comedians who opened their hearts to Summit View School. The talent we had on stage was truly a testament to how loved and respected Sherri is. The money raised will help to provide additional support and resources for countless students."



Sherri Shepherd emcees the event



George Lopez performs his set



Louis Anderson performs his set

On March 19th, The Help Group hosted its 21st Annual Teddy Bear Ball at the Beverly Hilton Hotel International Ballroom to benefit children with autism and other special needs. On this truly festive evening, The Help Group was pleased to present its *Help Humanitarian Award* to Steve Stark, President of TV and Development at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios.

Gala Chairs for the event included Kevin Beggs, Chairman, Lionsgate Television, Craig Erwich, Senior VP of Originals, Hulu, Pearlana Igbokwe, President, Universal Television, Mindy Kaling, Award-winning Actress, NY Times Best-Selling Author and Producer, Warren Littlefield, President, Littlefield Company, Elisabeth Moss, Emmy Award-winning Actress, Ray Romano, Emmy Award-winning Actor and Comic, and Jennifer Salke, Head of Amazon Studios.

Chris O'Dowd, the multi-talented star of *Get Shorty* and *Bridesmaids*, emceed the event and delighted over 500 guests with his quick humor and warmth.

Louis Price, former lead singer of the Temptations, and The Help Group Children's Choir kicked off the evening with a rousing rendition of the classic tune "Dancing In The Street" and the cheery Meghan Trainor hit "Better When I'm Dancing."

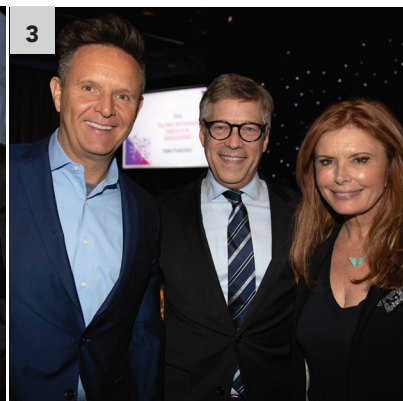
The evening also featured a show-stopping Motown Medley performed by Louis Price and Friends that included songs like the Temptation's "Papa Was a Rolling Stone." Audience members sang and clapped along joyously to the memorable hits.

Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO, and Gary H. Carmona, Help Group Board Chair, welcomed and thanked guests for their generosity, support and friendship.

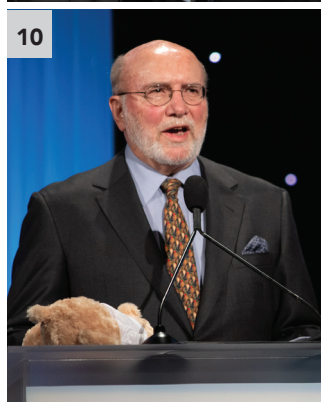
Circle of Friends Board Members, Gala Co-Chairs and former Help Humanitarian Award honorees, Jamie and Chris McGurk, each spoke about their personal commitment to supporting the children before introducing a video about The Help Group.

Mercedes and Kerry, two parents featured in the video, spoke about how much The Help Group has meant to their children and families.

Dr. Berman and Dr. Firestone shared relevant Help Group updates, including the launch of an innovative and groundbreaking new program, Kaleidoscope, which offers support, education, and connection to an ever increasing number of LGBTQ+ children, young adults and families, particularly those with special needs. To cap off a fantastic first act, Gala Chair Mindy Kaling presented The Help Group Children's Choir, singing 'A Million Dreams,' with a heartwarming introduction.



- 1) Steve Stark 2) (L-R) Dr. Barbara Firestone, Gary H. Carmona, Steve Stark 3) (L-R) Mark Burnett, Steve Stark, 6) Steve Stark, Jennifer Salke 7) Steve Stark with His Daughters Callie & Cady 8) Chris O'Dowd 9) Mindy Kaling McGurk 14) Sandra Stern, Kevin Beggs 15) Steve Stark 16) Kevin Beggs, Ken Solomon 17) Celeste Alleyne 18) 21) Louis Price 22) (L-R) Dr. Barbara Firestone, Laura Schembri, William and Sandy Esensten, Dr. Susan Berman



Dr. Susan Berman, Help Group COO, and Dick Costello, Help Group Circle of Friends Board Member and Gala Co-Chair, presented the Dr. Adam Opportunity Fund to the guests. The fund provides scholarship support, mentoring, college counseling, vocational training, internships and even basic food, clothing and shelter to thousands of children served by The Help Group who have been the victims of abuse and neglect, are part of the foster care system, or are from families with very limited means.

Evelyn, who will benefit from the Dr. Adam Opportunity Fund, spoke openly about her story of perseverance and hope, and how much the fund has meant to her.

Michael Hackman, Founder & CEO of Hackman Capital Partners and Keyes for Kids Teddy Bear Golf Classic Co-Chair, led a spirited live auction that included a set visit to 'Get Shorty,' a suite at the Staples Center, and Help Group classrooms. The auction was a spectacular success for the children of The Help Group!

Circle of Friends Board Member, Gala Co-Chair, and former Help Humanitarian Award honoree Ken Solomon, along with Circle of Friends Board Member, Gala Chair, and former Help Humanitarian Award honoree Kevin Beggs, introduced the evening's honoree retrospective and welcomed Steve Stark to the family of Help Group honorees. Warren Littlefield, one of the evening's Gala Chairs, introduced his good friend and colleague Steve Stark with funny and touching remarks. It was truly a classy way to welcome Steve to the stage.

Dr. Firestone and Gary H. Carmona presented Steve with the Help Humanitarian Award, and thanked him for his humanitarian spirit, compassion and caring that helps build brighter futures for the children. As a tribute to Steve, The Help Group Children's Choir performed the song "You've Got a Friend in Me."

In his unforgettable acceptance speech, Steve told poignant stories and talked in notable detail about the children of The Help Group – their dreams and aspirations. Steve remarked to the audience, "I'd like to acknowledge that your kindness and generosity has helped write a better story for Rachel, Rodney, Jethro, Max and Bella and the other children who The Help Group reaches. The world needs more people like all of you. So, thank you for making a difference. And, thank you to Dr. Firestone and The Help Group Board of Directors for this great honor."

The Help Group is so grateful to our remarkable honoree, Steve Stark, and to everyone who joined us for this time-honored celebration of the beauty and potential of the children.

Roma Downey 4) Warren Littlefield, Steve Stark 5) Dr. Barbara Firestone, Steve Stark, Kevin Beggs
10) Dick Costello 11) Student Speaker Evelyn, Dr. Susan Berman 12) Michael Hackman 13) Jamie & Chris
Dr. Barbara Firestone, Kari Van Gundy, Gary H. Carmona 19) Ann & Dick Costello 20) Mike & Susan Berk
23) The Help Group Choir TBB CONTINUED....



1) Steve Stark, Mindy Kaling 2) Steve Stark & The Help Group Choir 3) (L-R) Dr. Barbara Firestone, Steve Stark, Dr. Susan Berman 4) Dr. Barbara Firestone, David Firestone
5) (L-R) Adam Arkin, Chris O'Dowd, Steve Stark, ?? 6) Parent Speaker Mercedes 7) Parent Speaker Kerry 8) (L-R) Kevin Beggs, Richard M. Zelle, Ken Soloman
9) (L-R) Louis Price, Faye Price, Steve Stark, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Gary H. Carmona, Joy Monkash 10) Mindy Kaling, Chris O'Dowd, Kate Coleman, Charlotte Bashner, The Help Group Choir



1) (L-R) Help Group Students in The ACEing Autism Program on The Sherman Oaks Campus, Richard Spurling, Co-Founder of ACEing Autism, Emily Werman



2) Emily Werman coaching a young athlete during a clinic and conference run by ACEing Autism in association with UCLA Center for Autism Research and Treatment, Moose Toys, Deakin University, AllPlay and with the help of Pam Shriver & Vania King.



The Help Group is proud to announce that Emily Werman, a Help Group graduate and an accomplished tennis player who returned to our campus to teach, is the recipient of the ACEing Autism national essay contest. Emily, who helps to lead the ACEing Autism school tennis program here at The Help Group, will be flown to New York as a recipient of the prize. While there, she will be a guest at the U.S. Open, and attend several events, and a conference related to ACEing Autism where she will be able to promote the importance of the program to the autism community. She will also have the honor of helping run the ACEing Autism Clinic at Flushing Meadows where the U.S Open is held.

"I decided to enter into this essay competition because I have found this program so rewarding," says Emily. "I wanted to express how ACEing Autism has impacted my life and the lives of so many other children and families. Having been selected as the winner of this essay is a dream come true."

ACEing Autism is a non-profit organization, and its mission is to connect children with autism and their families through a unique tennis program. ACEing Autism promotes lifelong skills for young people with autism, such as physical fitness, social interaction, communication, and teamwork building.

"Coaching through the ACEing Autism program at The Help Group offered me a great opportunity to connect my love for tennis to working with kids on the spectrum. Moreover, I'm able to convey an important message: progress not perfection. I always remind students that we all make mistakes and that's okay. The important thing is to never give up and keep trying. There is always room to grow and improve, and getting better takes practice, just like anything else. These are the critical life lessons that were imparted to me at The Help Group as a young person," remarked Emily. Emily attended The Help Group from 7th to 12th grade, and even began coaching tennis to afterschool groups through ACEing Autism while she was a student. She later went on to attend Cal Lutheran University, and play tennis at the collegiate level while pursuing her bachelor's degree in Disabilities Studies.

"Emily is simply an outstanding teacher and tennis coach here at The Help Group. She's truly an accomplished individual and we are so moved by her excellent, award-winning essay. The Help Group is honored to have helped Emily achieve her lifelong goals," said Dr. Susan Berman, COO at The Help Group.

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH AT THE HELP GROUP



So much happened at The Help Group in recognition of National Autism Awareness Month this April. On April 3rd, The Help Group once again hosted a Music for Autism concert on the Sherman Oaks campus. Music Director and pianist Ryan Cantwell joined The Help Group stage for the fourth time, and brought a few of the multi-talented cast members of Charlie and The Chocolate Factory – which enjoyed a terrific run at The Pantages Theater – along with additional seasoned performers.

The Help Group hosted its 9th Annual Special Needs Resource Fair on Sunday, April 7th. This annual, free event is an opportunity for parents and professionals to discover the wonderful resources that Los Angeles has to offer its special needs community, and is open to the public.

Throughout the month, NBC4 ran an autism awareness PSA featuring The Help Group, with morning anchor Daniella Guzman. Additionally, Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti recorded an autism awareness PSA that is on The Help Group's website.

The Help Group once again launched its annual "Learn the Facts: Early Signs of Autism" campaign – with updated information that reflects the CDC's recent findings. Research has shown that early identification and intensive early intervention can result in significant positive outcomes for many children with autism.

The Help Group is proudly provided local elected officials with materials from its "Learn the Facts: Early Signs of Autism" campaign and a complimentary copy of *Faces of Promise: Looking Beyond Autism* – a beautifully designed book by Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO, and Rick Ehrlich, a renowned photographer and physician.

Throughout April, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® made The Help Group's "Learn the Facts" brochures available in more 200 participating locations in California. The Help Group has partnered with The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® to promote autism awareness for 20 years.

For the 13th consecutive year, Gelson's Markets hosted a fund-raising campaign in support of The Help Group's autism programs. Copies of the "Learn the Facts" brochures were made available at 18 Southern California locations, and customers had the opportunity to donate to The Help Group at store registers.

Our thanks The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf® and Gelson's Markets for their ongoing commitment to children with autism and their families.

THE HELP GROUP HOSTS ITS 9TH ANNUAL SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE FAIR



The Help Group hosted its 9th Annual Special Needs Resource Fair on Sunday, April 7th at the Autism Center in Sherman Oaks. The free event, which attracts more than 600 people each year, is an opportunity for parents and professionals to connect with the resources available for the special needs community, including children with autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays, and emotional challenges.

A diverse mix of exhibitors provided information and answered questions about services for

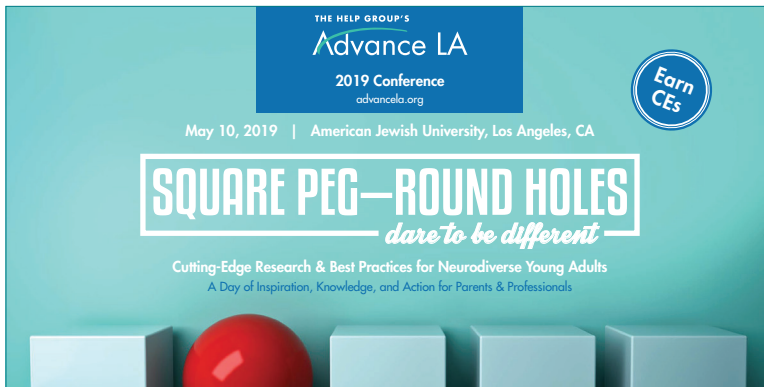
children, young people, and adults, as well as their families. There were representatives from support groups, medical and therapeutic services, educational supports, financial and estate planning, advocacy services, respite services, recreational and camping programs, vocational and residential programs, and more.

The event featured opportunities for children and families to interact with therapy dogs from the Alliance of Therapy Dogs; visit with animals from Special Spirit, Inc. Therapeutic Riding Center; and play with friends on the Hasbro playground. Food and snacks were available for guests.

The Help Group's Kids Like Me program – featured at the event – offers summer, winter and spring camps at The Help Group's Sherman Oaks and Culver City locations. Camp programs are developed by a multidisciplinary team to address unique strengths and abilities, foster social skills, and cultivate friendships. They are led by highly trained therapists and counselors, and campers are assessed and matched with the right program to ensure the best possible camp experience for everyone.

Our thanks to the faculty, staff, volunteers and exhibitors who helped make this event a big success for our community!

THE HELP GROUP'S 2019 ADVANCE LA CONFERENCE SHOWCASES PROMINENT EXPERTS AND CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH



The Help Group's 2019 Advance LA Conference, Square Peg - Round Holes: Dare to be Different, took place on Friday, May 10 at the American Jewish University and featured 20 internationally prominent experts whose research and practice support young adults with autism, learning differences and ADHD. This year's conference theme focused on neurodiversity, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), LGBTQ+ research and support, social skills, career paths, executive functioning, and more. More than 300 parents, educators, clinicians, researchers, graduate, and undergraduate students were in attendance.

Our Keynote Speaker, Steve Silberman discussed the growing movement to frame autism and other conditions, such as dyslexia and ADHD, as natural human variations that deserve support and accommodations, rather than disorders that need to be eradicated from the human genome. Silberman advocates that neurological differences are authentic forms of human diversity, that all human lives have value, and that atypical forms of brain wiring can also convey unusual skills and aptitudes. He argues that society should help individuals make the most of their native strengths and special interests, rather than focusing on trying to correct their deficits or normalize their behavior.



In addition to Steve Silberman, other featured sessions and speakers included a popular DBT track by Sasha Ginsburg-Gutstein, LCSW and Erin Lotz, LCSW, Luncheon Speaker Rabbi Sherre Hirsch, and our afternoon keynotes Dr. Anthony Rostain and Dr. B. Janet Hibbs who showed fascinating video footage from a young adult's perspective on transitioning into college and adulthood. There was also a highly attended session by two young adults discussing their unique friendship and advice on how to form lasting connections.



1) (L-R) Dr. Jason Bolton, Vice President of Programs at The Help Group, Dr. Barbara Firestone, President & CEO at The Help Group, Dr. Ellis Crasnow, Director, STEM³ Academy & STEM Education at The Help Group, Susan Berman, COO, The Help Group and Dr. Diane Flannery, Senior Director of Design & Strategy at The Help Group 2) Keynote Speaker Author Steve 3) Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson, Director, PEERS Clinic UCLA Silberman 4) Keynote Speaker Dr. Anthony L. Rostain 5) Lunch Guest Speaker Rabbi Sherre Hirsch

THE HELP GROUP CELEBRATES 10TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS SPONSORED BY BEAR GIVERS

FESTIVAL *of* ARTS

A CELEBRATION OF YOUNG ARTISTS

Sponsored By

**Bear Givers**

On May 18th, The Help Group once again presented Festival of Arts: A Celebration of Young Artists sponsored by Bear Givers – a New York based non-profit organization – for the 10th consecutive year.

Bear Givers is truly a special organization that have made it their mission to bring happiness to the lives of children and adults in need through various programs. In particular, The Bear Givers EmpowerArt program gives kids with special needs the invaluable opportunity to gain tremendous pride in their creativity through showcasing their art.

“At The Help Group, the arts are absolutely fundamental to our students’ journey to expression and self-discovery. Bear Givers, and their EmpowerArt program, have created a transformative experience for our students. When these children are able to see their artwork displayed in a studio setting, nothing can replace the joy and sense of achievement that they have in that moment,” said Dr. Barbara Firestone, President and CEO of The Help Group. The annual art show featured three distinct exhibitions by Help Group students: Through Our Eyes, a collection of over 150 paintings, The Art of STEM, a collection of award-winning robotics, and a brand new installation, POP Art, a collection of paintings inspired by popular culture.

The Festival took place at the Santa Monica Art Studios, located in a historic hangar at the Santa Monica Airport. Year after year, this unique space provides a warm and open setting for Help Group students, their friends and families to enjoy the artwork.

“Students have the opportunity to explore the arts and sciences in a deep way and this contributes to their creativity and success in both,” said Ellis Crasnow, Director of STEM³ Academy and STEM Education at The Help Group.

As is tradition, Dr. Barbara Firestone acknowledged the young artists from The Help Group’s Village Glen, Bridgeport, Bridgeport Vocational Education, and STEM³ Academy schools; acknowledged Bear Givers and its Chairman & Founder Joe Sprung, who was in attendance, along with Diane Lempert, President of Bear Givers, for their enduring commitment to the children. To commemorate the 10th Annual Festival of Arts Sponsored By Bear Givers, Dr. Firestone presented Joe Sprung with a festive cake and spoke a few words about Joe’s spirit of philanthropy and Bear Givers’ dedication to bringing happiness to the lives of all children.

Joe Sprung expressed, “The annual Festival of Arts took place and once again the young artists exceeded all expectations, displaying a beautiful and colorful exhibition of their original work. We have watched the students grow and we have seen their artistic ability grow as well. We are grateful to Dr. Barbara Firestone and the staff of The Help Group who embrace our programs with such enthusiasm and never lose sight of our mission. They have been a pleasure to work with over the past years and completely understand the true objective of our EmpowerArt Program, participating to the fullest extent and taking it to a higher level every year. We look forward to many more special events together!”

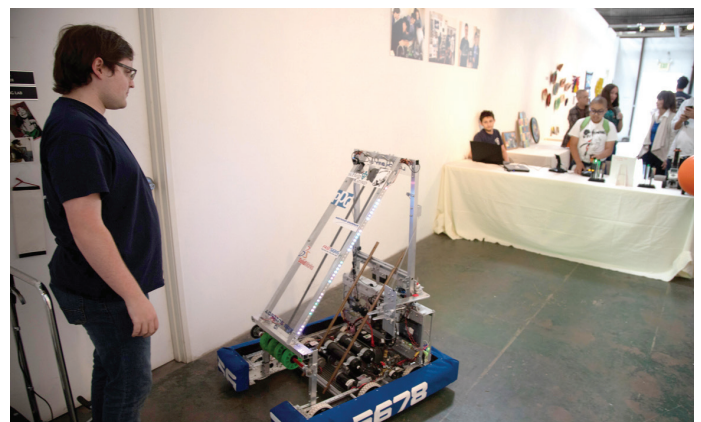
Our thanks to Bear Givers, Joe Sprung, Diane Lempert, our teachers, faculty, staff, and a mighty congratulations to all the young artists for another spectacular exhibition!



Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO, and Joe Sprung, Chairman & Founder of Bear Givers



(L-R) Joe Sprung, Chairman & Founder of Bear Givers, Dr. Ellis Crasnow, Director of STEM³ Academy and STEM Education, The Help Group, Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO, Megumi Guillaume, STEM³ Academy Teacher



HELP GROUP STUDENT'S PARTICIPATE IN THE 3RD ANNUAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED GAME DAY AT HARVARD WESTLAKE



On Friday, April 26, nearly eighty students from The Help Group's Bridgeport School participated in the 3rd Annual Special Olympics Unified Game Day event hosted by Harvard-Westlake School.

The festivities commenced with enthusiastic Harvard-Westlake students greeting The Help Group students with applause, homemade signs, and high-fives. The spirited gathering – called a "tunnel of love" – has become a tradition for these joint school Special Olympics events. What a wonderful way to start the day!

Lisa Rozati, Director of Special Projects at The Help Group, and Pam Clark, Director of Autism Schools at The Help Group, welcomed the students, volunteers, faculty, staff and coaches, and thanked Harvard-Westlake administrators, Jordan Church, Dean of students, and Michelle Bracken, humanities teacher for their support of this event, as well as Rachel Grode, the high school senior who spearheaded this event. Rachel has been actively involved for the past three years in supporting the Special Olympics on her campus and collaborating with The Help Group to host this annual event. She is a remarkable student leader and champion for young people of all abilities.

Before the games commenced, a Help Group student athlete shared the Special Olympics oath, "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Student athletes participated in several sports and activities throughout the morning. For track and field, students ran relay races, sprints and practiced long jumping. Additionally, students participated in basketball and soccer drills and played full games after scrimmaging, while some Help Group students were paired with the Harvard-Westlake cheer team to practice school spirit. Outdoor bowling was also featured in the line-up of games.

After the games and events concluded, Help Group and Harvard-Westlake students all sat in a circle on the field for a closing ceremony. Pam Clark shared a few remarks, saying, "Bridgeport students, I truly commend you for showcasing all the athletic skills you've learned throughout the year, and to Harvard-Westlake student volunteers, I'd like to once again express our gratitude for graciously hosting The Help Group and warmly welcoming our students to your school."

Our heartfelt thanks to Harvard Westlake's administration, faculty, coaches and students for hosting such a wonderful event; Harvard-Westlake's Dean Jordan Church and Michelle Bracken; Harvard-Westlake student leader Rachel Grode, and to Help Group Staff, Faculty and Coaches. We are most grateful to everyone involved for creating events and opportunities where our students can truly shine!



(L-R) Pam Clark, Michelle Bracken, Rachel Brode, Lisa Rozati, and Dean Jordan Church



Rachel Brode and Help Group students



MUSIC FOR AUTISM CONCERT KICKS OFF AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH AT THE HELP GROUP



Orchestrating Stronger Lives



On April 3rd, The Help Group once again hosted a Music for Autism concert on the Sherman Oaks campus. Music Director and pianist Ryan Cantwell joined The Help Group stage for the fourth time, and brought a few of the multi-talented cast members of *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* – currently enjoying a terrific run at The Pantages Theater – along with additional seasoned performers.

For this special assembly, students from Bridgeport, Sunrise and Village Glen schools filled the Autism Center with excitement as they awaited the concert's start. Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President and CEO, kicked off the hour with a few remarks and introductions of performers.

Sabrina Harper, a Broadway singer who has performed with Music for Autism before, gave a warm welcome to all the students. The cast then opened the show with "Pure Imagination" – a memorable classic from *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*.

The rest of the concert included Disney songs like "Part Of Your World" from *The Little Mermaid*; "Let It Go" from *Frozen*; "Practically Perfect" from *Mary Poppins* and "Hakuna Matata" from *The Lion King*.

In a touching and uplifting moment, Collin Jeffrey, who plays Charlie in the show, sang "A Million Dreams" from *The Greatest Showman*. He was joined on stage by members of The Help Group Children's Choir who had recently performed the powerful song at this year's Teddy Bear Ball.

"It's so fulfilling for us to share our voice with the children, to see the happiness on their faces, and listen to them sing right along with us. What a beautiful way for them to express themselves. To bring the arts and music to the students of The Help Group today was really special," said Sabrina.

One of the performers, Brynn Williams, remarked, "I have three brothers and two are on the autism spectrum. It was so wonderful to be able to be here, and sing and share music with the students the way I do with my brothers back home."

The concert ended on a high note – with Ryan Cantwell teaching the students a lesson in conducting and percussion. Everyone in the audience joined in during this interactive portion of the show.

"How special that Ryan and such a talented group of performers could join us as we recognize National Autism Awareness Month. We are so thrilled that they could share their artistry and warm hearts with some of the young people of The Help Group. The opportunity for our students to dance and sing along with them was truly a gift," said Dr. Firestone.

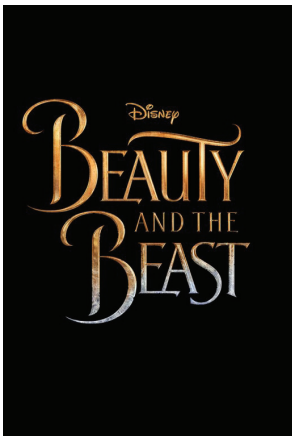
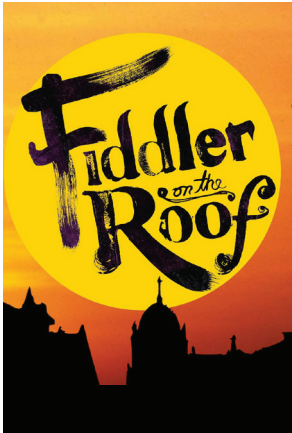
Brad Shahine, Director of Public Affairs, and Dr. Firestone presented the musical guests with special presents for each to take home. The performers even stayed after the concert to take photos with the enthusiastic young people.

Our heartfelt thanks to our Music for Autism friends, performers Sabrina Harper, Jennifer Jill Malenke, Brynn Williams, Rasmus Borkowski, Henry Boshart, Collin Jeffrey, Clyde Voce, Greg German, Music Director Ryan Cantwell and the amazing faculty of The Help Group for making this concert such a wonderful afternoon for the children.



- 1) (L-R) Dr. Barbara Firestone, Help Group President & CEO, Ryan Cantwell, Henry Boshart, Greg German, Collin Jeffrey, Sabrina Harper, Rasmus Borkowski, Brynn Williams, Jennifer Jill Malenke, and Brad Shahine, Director of Public Affairs at The Help Group 2) Ryan Cantwell 3) (L-R) Sabrina Harper, Brynn Williams, Jennifer Jill Malenke, Henry Boshart, Rasmus Borkowski 4) (L-R) Henry Boshart, Rasmus Borkowski, Collin Jeffrey 5) (L-R) Dr. Mary Bauman, Clinical Director at The Help Group, and a Help Group student

THE HELP GROUP'S PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAM SHINES BRIGHT WITH PRODUCTIONS OF 'FIDDLER ON THE ROOF' AND 'BEAUTY AND THE BEAST'



On May 14th and 15th, students from The Help Group's Village Glen and Bridgeport schools put on a delightful performance of the classic musical *Fiddler on the Roof*.

The performance included unforgettable renditions of musical numbers like "Tradition", "Matchmaker", "If I Were a Rich Man" and "Sunrise, Sunset." Students performed touching solos, duets and even showcased a rousing and dynamic vocal round robin during "The Sabbath Prayer" song. The student performers soared under the direction of Jacqueline Schultz, Director of Performing Arts at The Help Group, and the musical direction of Mitch Kaplan.

The impressive set was created by Bridgeport Vocational Education students out of reclaimed wood and found material – under the guidance of teacher Josh Ziskin.

"I am so proud of this year's production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and the students and faculty who made the show possible. The performing arts give our students an invaluable gift – the ability to grow and learn through creativity. When I see the students' proud, beaming faces as they hear the applause at curtain – I could not be more thrilled," said Pam Clark, Director of Autism Schools.

This Spring, The Help Group's Summit View School also mounted a production of *Beauty and the Beast*. The show was directed by Jacqueline Schultz, under the musical direction of Mitch Kaplan, and the art direction

of Summit View art teacher, Rosie DeMarco. Rosie and Jacqueline created the costumes for the show, with the help of Sarah Lomke – a Teacher's Assistant at Summit View. Naomi, a Summit View student who played the lead role of Belle, is a prolific performer who has appeared on Netflix's hit show *A-Typical* and many commercials.

Jacqueline Schultz remarked, "As ever, I was so moved by the commitment of these young performers in both productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Their joy and enthusiasm during rehearsal and throughout performances was truly inspiring. I continue to be amazed by the children of The Help Group!"

Our heartfelt thanks to Jacqueline Schultz, Mitch Kaplan, Josh Ziskin, Rosie DeMarco, Sarah Lomke and all of the students, teachers and faculty who made these marvelous two productions possible

COMING SOON THIS FALL...

The Help Group's Summit View West
is putting on a production of:





Leading the Way for Young People with **SPECIAL NEEDS**



- Village Glen School
- Bridgeport School
- Bridgeport Vocational Education Center
- Young Learners
- Sunrise School
- Summit View School
- Westview School of Arts and Technology
- North Hills Prep
- 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, abuse and emotional challenges.

The Help Group's nine specialized day schools offer pre-K through high school programs for more than 1,400 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. Recently, The Help Group launched programs to serve LGBTQ+ youth and homeschooled students. With more than 850 staff members, The Help Group's state-of-the-art schools and programs are located on six campuses in the Los Angeles area and Irvine.

ASSESSMENT

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

18+ PROGRAMS

LGBTQ+ SERVICES & PROGRAMS

COACHING

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

PARENT EDUCATION

AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

DAY CAMPS

CULVER CITY | SHERMAN OAKS EAST | SHERMAN OAKS WEST
VALLEY GLEN | VAN NUYS | IRVINE

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in Irvine!**



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To learn more, contact Dr. Ellis Crasnow:
888.943.1816 | ecrasnow@thehelpgroup.org

www.THGLearningCenter.org



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... Located in Valley Glen, Culver City and now in Irvine, **STEM³ Academy** provides an innovative 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 uses an evidence-based and interdisciplinary approach to intensive early intervention for pre-school age to kindergarten 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 therapeutic learning environment dedicated to supporting students with social and emotional challenges and helps 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

THE HELP GROUP'S LEARNING CENTER

The Help Group **Learning Center** is a K-12 program which provides a tailored educational curriculum for families who have opted to homeschool their children. The Learning Center provides a rigorous curriculum in the core academic subjects, as well as opportunities for accelerated learning. Social Emotional learning is embedded in the curriculum.

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; neuropsychological testing; **REACH** - after-school day rehabilitation; **Stepping Stones** - an intensive day treatment for children ages 3 to 5 and therapeutic behavioral services. **Full Service Partnership** is a community-based program that provides intensive services to both children struggling with mental health issues and their families.

LGBTQ SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Kaleidoscope supports LGBTQ+ children, youth, young adults and their families in building healthy relationships, strong social connections and critically needed life skills. Through high quality, innovative programming, using the latest research and evidence-based programs, our mission is to help each person realize their unique potential and thrive.

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 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.

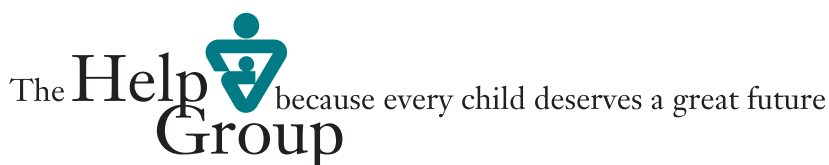
The Help Group – **UCLA Autism Alliance** dedicated to evidence-based best practices in ASD diagnosis, intervention and treatment.

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



Administrative Office

13130 Burbank Boulevard
Sherman Oaks, California 91401



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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 · 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 i.a./club i.a. TEEN
Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism · The Help Group Child & Family Center · Kaleidoscope
The Help Group Learning Center · The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorder

Campuses

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

www.thehelpgroup.org  

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

UPCOMING EVENTS



Teddy Bear Golf Classic 2019

Valencia Country Club
September 6, 2019



Very Special Innovation Fair

STEM³ Academy – Valley Glen
Saturday, September 14



Very Special Innovation Fair

STEM³ Academy – Irvine
Saturday, October 12



SUMMIT 2019

Advances and Best Practices in
Autism – ADHD – Learning Disabilities
Skirball Cultural Center
October 25-26, 2019



Holiday Carnival

The Help Group
December 14, 2019



*We invite you to
follow us on Facebook...*

 **THE HELP GROUP**