

Insight

Spring 2019

Developments at The New England Center for Children®

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April is
**AUTISM
AWARENESS**
Month!

Photograph by Ella Giles, NECC Program Specialist



The New England Center
for Children®
Autism Education and Research

Insight

Spring 2019

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Our Mission: To transform the lives of children with autism worldwide through education, research, and technology.

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Please send comments or suggestions to development@necc.org.

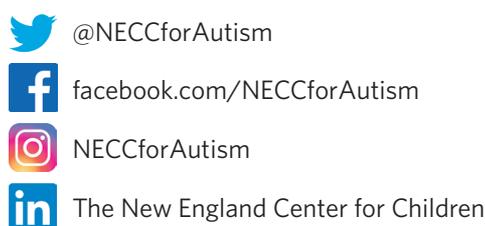
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A LETTER FROM OUR CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Dear friend,

Each April, we light up the building in blue, wear our blue NECC gear, and find myriad other small ways to celebrate Autism Awareness month. It's an important month for us here, certainly, but for staff and NECC families, or anyone touched by autism, autism awareness is not confined to one month, it is an ongoing effort.

We improve autism awareness any time we publicize student successes, event results, research, and the ACE® technology. I hope you share your experiences with autism with others, too, and why you give to NECC. If you haven't seen the fiscal year 2018 Annual Report,

I encourage you to email us at development@necc.org for a copy. The report highlights the great work your giving accomplishes throughout the year. Pass it on and let others know that a gift to NECC has impact that can last a lifetime.

Remember to register for the annual 5K Walk/Run for Autism, which takes place on Saturday, May 11. Not only does this event provide needed dollars for the Annual Fund, it's simply a GREAT time. It's hard not to be inspired by our students on the race course, and the joy they share with their families and teachers. Register at www.necc.org/5K.

Sincerely,

Jared Bouzan, MEd
Chief Development Officer

IN THE NEWS

The Boston Globe

The Sunday edition featured the Children of Promise Gala's record-breaking success and the Globe South edition highlighted "The Mike" Golf Invitational, which has raised important funds for NECC for more than a decade.

Boston Herald

The paper wrote about the success of NECC's Partner Program Classroom model and its 20 year anniversary.

Boston 25 News

The television news station featured NECC in an autism special. Dr. Becky MacDonald's study on identifying signs of autism in infants of siblings with autism was highlighted.

Abu Dhabi World

The leading English language newspaper in Abu Dhabi wrote an extensive feature on The Mohammed bin Rashid Center for Special Education operated by The New England Center for Children in Abu Dhabi.

Chamber Exchange TV— Worcester Chamber of Commerce

Julie Weiss, NECC Vocational Program Director, discussed NECC's vocational services program and the need for employer partners in the greater Worcester area.

Friday Magazine

This publication of Gulf News in Abu Dhabi featured stories from families whose children attend The Mohammed bin Rashid Center for Special Education operated by The New England Center for Children.



Find us @NECCforAutism

Trending NECC hashtags

#NECCforAutism
#NECC5K
#AutismEducation
#AutismResearch
#AutismTechnology
#TeamNECC
#WorkatNECC

On the cover: Catherine, age 17, works on her customer service delivery skills while working at the school store around Valentine's Day. Gifts to the Annual Fund support vocational training so that when students graduate at age 22 they are equipped with job skills. Photograph by Ella Giles, NECC Program Specialist.

» Your Gift in Action

Your gift provides a suite of experiences for students and staff: new life jackets for swimming, trips into the community, gym and fitness equipment, upgraded teaching tools, and more. **Thank you.**



Program Updates

EDUCATION

AUTISM Specialization



Your gift helped supplement graduate training for approximately 350 graduate students this year.

NECC and Simmons University Department of Education added an Autism Specialization designation within the Master of Science in Education degree (MSEd) earned on-site at NECC. The Autism Specialization reflects the degree program's autism-focused coursework and the graduate students' experience using ABA with students at NECC.

NECC established the partnership with Simmons in 1992 to provide graduate opportunities at little to no cost to staff. Today that equals an approximately \$45,000 benefit to staff. The program has graduated more than 1,100 master's level special education teachers, who are some of the top autism service providers working in the field today.

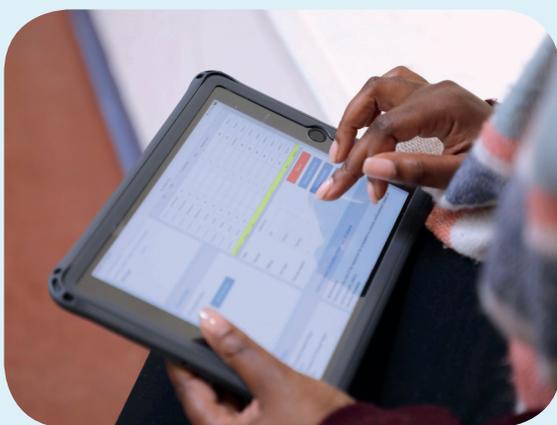
Simmons
UNIVERSITY

+



The New England Center
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Autism Education and Research

TECHNOLOGY



Thanks to your gift, we have updated technology around the campus in Southborough.

We added 30 iPads and protective cases and multiple specialty communication devices. Communication devices help non-verbal students "talk," and iPads provide staff with upgraded technology to access the ACE® ABA Software System. Teachers use the ACE® application throughout the day with their students to access skill-based lesson plans, record data, and chart student progress.



TEACHER FEATURE

Geguel "Junior" Landestoy

Where are you from?

I was born in the Dominican Republic but was raised in Boston.

Where did you go to school?

I graduated from Union College and majored in biology and history. I am currently enrolled in the on-site Western New England University ABA graduate program under the supervision of Dr. Chata Dickson. I plan to obtain my BCBA licensure upon graduation.

What is the best part of your job?

Being able to make a significant difference in my students' lives and working with my peers. I try to ensure that teachers feel comfortable, safe, and excited to work with our students.

Tell us about your experience outside of NECC.

I am a board member at The Kerry Jon Walker Fund. This nonprofit helps shape future humanitarian leaders by funding financially challenged teens from Boston Public Schools to



Your gift supports research that helps children with autism acquire life skills that will serve them now and for years to come.

Individuals with ASD may have difficulty during medical exams, which poses potential long-term problems for both preventive care and acute medical care. In a recent study, we looked at ways to increase participation in a routine medical exam while decreasing disruption during the exam. One example of a routine procedure — drawing blood — was broken down into multiple smaller steps.



- 1 Therapist says “I’m going to touch you with this” (mock needle)
- 2 Therapist holds mock needle 61 cm from participant
- 3 Therapist holds mock needle 30 cm from participant
- 4 Therapist holds mock needle 5 cm from participant
- 5 Therapist holds mock needle 3 cm from participant for 1 second
- 6 Therapist holds mock needle 3 cm from participant for 5 seconds
- 7 Therapist holds mock needle 3 cm from participant for 10 seconds
- 8 Therapist touches mock needle to arm for 1 second
- 9 Therapist touches mock needle to arm for 5 seconds
- 10 Therapist touches mock needle to arm for 10 seconds

Researchers then conducted a fading procedure in which steps were gradually and progressively introduced until the entire task was tolerated. This procedure was effective in increasing medical adherence with exam steps. Additional research is needed.

attend a service trip to Rwanda, Africa. I chaperoned one of the mission trips last summer and it was amazing. I was a mentor, an educator, and a friend to three students. I was honored to be a chaperone because I knew I was helping the students learn more about themselves and the struggles that others face daily.

I worked for two years as a counselor at Double H Ranch, a camp for children with life threatening illnesses, in Lake Luzerne, New York. It was important to help create an environment where children can be children and not a patient.

Prior to that, I was an Immigration Fellow at the Upstate NY Global Collective. I conducted analytic research on the working conditions of seasonal migrant workers and the hardships these individuals faced while working in different sectors of the dairy industry in Upstate New York.



Junior, a Level 2 Teacher, is pictured with NECC student Brian.

Acts of Generosity

» Angelo and Ellie Moutoudis

Bright sunshine streams through large windows in their crisp white kitchen, which features an expansive island, stylish gray stools, a blooming arrangement of pink and white hydrangeas, and a large box of heart shaped Dunkin' donuts. It's Valentine's Day, and one thing is easy to see — the Moutoudis family takes great pride in all they do.

Angelo and Ellie Moutoudis are blessed. They have two children, Demitra and Yianni. Angelo, originally from Greece, is a Dunkin' franchisee with DEKK Group, working his way from a single franchise to a group that spans the northeast. They have lived in Southborough for 15 years and have been supporters of The New England Center for Children for nearly as long.

Angelo and his partners sponsored the very first Carlos Placido Dunkin' Donuts Golf Classic in 1997. The Moutoudis's credit NECC Board member and Dunkin' franchisee Neal Faulkner with helping them get started giving to autism.

"We take a lot of pride in the tournament," says Angelo. "Neal enlightened us on NECC, and it's really a tournament sponsored by Dunkin' franchisees to give back to NECC, to give to a great cause. Helping young kids — what's more important than that?"

"NECC is helping people now. I can see how the kids progress. It's meaningful to give to that, and to give to help the teachers."
—Ellie Moutoudis

"One of my managers, her daughter is four years old and has autism," says Angelo. "She excels in languages — two other languages — but she has trouble with simple day-to-day tasks. You see the worry on her mother's face. We feel lucky for what we have but we have empathy for others who may have different challenges to face."

"This is the rest of her life she will be dealing with it. It's hard not to walk away and think about her future," Ellie says.

When Ellie and Angelo's daughter, Demitra, was in kindergarten at the Mary Finn School in Southborough, she



became a peer mentor to a child in a NECC Partner Program Classroom. The child split his time between his NECC classroom on-site at the school and the typical classroom, providing as much integration opportunity as possible. Demitra taught her autistic peer how to ride a scooter board. Ellie has fond memories of the experience for both children.

"There are so many causes you can give to" Ellie says. "But NECC is helping people now. I can see how the kids progress. It's meaningful to give to that, and to give to help the teachers. The teachers are incredible."

Angelo and DEKK group sponsor the golf classic yearly. Inspired by the effect their giving has had on NECC and children with autism, the Moutoudis family has taken many other paths to raise awareness and funds for NECC. In 2015, Angelo signed up for the NECC 5K after years of watching it pass their street.

"I saw the kids [from NECC] walking and running the NECC 5K and I thought *I'm going to do this*," Angelo says. "When we see the kids doing it, it's a piece of cake to participate."

In just two weeks, he raised more than \$12,000 from 55 friends and business contacts. Inspired to do more, he joined

Team NECC for the Falmouth Road Race the following year. He smiles at the memory. "I was in Greece the week prior and had one week to train. It was tough, but when I learned that one of my partners donated \$5,000 to NECC, it made me want to do it even more."

That same year, they attended the Children of Promise Gala with friends and found yet another way to contribute to NECC's mission. Ellie and Angelo's personal and professional networks provide incredible support through these efforts. In addition to contributing financially, these events spread awareness of autism and the work NECC does to improve children's lives — a mission that the Moutoudis's care about deeply.

Over the summer Angelo attended a Dunkin' check presentation at the renovated NECC Southborough campus, where he decorated donuts with students.

"I was crying because I was so happy," he admits. "Think about twenty, thirty, forty years ago. Kids with autism were just forgotten or put in a classroom with no help. Today, to see what the school does for them — it's a good feeling to know I'm a part of that, even a little part, and helping as much as I can."

Gala Recap 2018



The **2018 Children of Promise Gala** raised \$775,000 for the Annual Fund. Nearly 450 guests attended the event hosted by KISS 108 radio personality Billy Costa.

The silent and live auctions brought in more than \$275,000, and sponsorships accounted for more than half a million dollars. Top auction packages included a walk-on role on *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and a dream vacation in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Gala attendees were treated to a surprise appearance by Robert Smigel and Triumph the Insult Comic Dog, as well as live music by Groove Authority

Outstanding Alumnus Will Green was met with a standing ovation when he took the stage to accept his award. Dr. Jackie MacDonald, a former NECC employee, was honored as NECC's Educator of the Year, and Allen & Major Associates, Inc. received the award for Community Autism Champion.



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Autism Education and Research

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www.necc.org

Boston • Abu Dhabi

SAVE THE DATE

**Team NECC runs
the Boston Marathon**
Monday, April 15, 2019
Hopkinton, MA

NECC 5K Walk/Run for Autism
Saturday, May 11, 2019
Southborough, MA
www.necc.org/5K

**Carlos Placido
Dunkin' Golf Classic**
Monday, June 3, 2019
Franklin, MA

New Balance Falmouth Road Race
Sunday, August 18, 2019
Falmouth, MA
15 bibs. Apply to run!
Email rdrew@necc.org

Children of Promise Gala
Friday, November 15, 2019
www.necc.org/gala



Race Day

SATURDAY, MAY 11 | 10AM

NEARY SCHOOL, 53 PARKERVILLE ROAD, SOUTHBOROUGH, MA

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KICK-OFF THE NEW YEAR BY FUNDRAISING FOR THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER
FOR CHILDREN! SIGN UP AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR WITH A TEAM AND SET
YOUR GOAL TODAY IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AT NECC.

REGISTER & FUNDRAISE ONLINE AT **WWW.NECC.ORG/5K**