

Insight

Spring 2018

Developments at The New England Center for Children®

INSIDE:

- » [Philanthropy](#) | page 2
- » [Acts of Generosity: Simone Pio-Clinton and Dan Clinton](#) | page 3
- » [Program Updates](#) | page 4



The New England Center
for Children®
Autism Education and Research

Insight

Spring 2018

Vol. 2, No. 1

A Letter from our CDO	1
Parent Match Challenge	1
Philanthropy	2
Acts of Generosity	3
Program Updates	4
Abu Dhabi Happenings	5
In the News	5
Gala Recap	6

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

Published by the Development Office at The New England Center for Children.

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

Vincent Strully, Jr.
President and CEO

Jared Bouzan, MEd
Chief Development Officer
jbouzan@necc.org

Joseph Ziska
Director of Development
jziska@necc.org

Beth McGonagle
Director of Operations and Stewardship
bmcgonagle@necc.org

Editor
Michele Hart, MA
Manager, Marketing and Communications
mhart@necc.org



www.necc.org
www.acenecc.org
www.neccabudhabi.org

@NECCforAutism
 facebook.com/NECCforAutism
 NECCforAutism
 The New England Center for Children

To sign up for the electronic version of this newsletter and receive e-communications from the Development Office, please email development@necc.org.

A LETTER FROM OUR CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Dear friend,

As a supporter of The New England Center for Children® (NECC®), you already know the importance of quality autism education. This year, beyond your generous giving, I ask that you take one more step. Start a dialogue about autism and NECC with your network.

Autism awareness is increasing thanks to wider recognition in the media, including television shows such as *Atypical* and *The Good Doctor*, but this type of publicity also makes it that much harder to demonstrate that autism spectrum disorder is a kaleidoscope of greatly varying abilities.

We, as a community, must recognize the value of smaller accomplishments. Each day, NECC students make breakthroughs. A home-based student makes eye contact with her father. A residential student dines at a restaurant. A day student attends a public school science class with his peers. A non-verbal student “speaks” hello using an iPad. These seemingly small achievements snowball, day after day, and ultimately produce big results, transforming the lives of students and their families.

So, share a story about your experience with autism. Talk to your friends and colleagues about why you give, go on our social media channels and comment. Spread the word.

Your philanthropy and personal thoughtfulness will benefit generations of children with autism for years ahead.

From all of us at NECC, thank you.

Jared Bouzan
Chief Development Officer



Parent Match C H A L L E N G E

NECC parents have been given the opportunity to help raise an additional \$50,000 for the NECC Annual Fund! A donor has offered to match, dollar for dollar, financial gifts made by parents, beyond their fiscal year 2017 gift – up to \$50,000! Double your impact simply by making a financial gift beyond what you made last year.

Parents can contribute in three ways:

1. Online at www.necc.org/parentmatch
2. By check payable to *The New England Center for Children*
3. Via gifts made toward the NECC Annual 5K Walk/Run for Autism! Consider supporting your child’s team or another team with a bigger donation this year necc.convio.net/5k



On the cover: Benjamin, age 5, gets a lift from his teacher after playing in the bounce house at NECC’s Annual Field Day. Field Day is funded 100% by the Annual Fund. (Photography by Eric Greenberg)

» Philanthropy



The Michael S. Dukakis Aquatic Center, also known as the natatorium, is widely considered a favorite spot on campus. Water provides students a space that is not only fun but incredibly useful for working on motor skills, safety, attending to instruction, fitness, and more. Students practice getting into the pool, floating, and swimming, and now, thanks to donor support, they also use kayaks!

Kayaks give students another tool to practice balance and safety, learn basic boating skills for recreation, and provide an additional reinforcer to their collection — many kids love the kayaks and consider it a special treat.



Students learn more than music in music class. The Annual Fund provides instruments, such as tambourines, boom sticks, guitars, and drums, that let students learn to follow cues, keep a beat, maintain control of their body, wait in turn, and combine their vocals with instrumental sound.

BY THE NUMBERS

- » FY 17 Donors: 3,378
- » Dollars received in FY 17: \$1,641,050
- » Fundraising events: 6
- » Total event attendance: 2,180
- » Dollars raised from events: \$1,100,763



Luke is one of NECC's student employees who works at the NECC school Student Store. Students learn to use an iPad point-of-sale system from Square. They ring up purchases, handle transactions, and print receipts for their customers. Open daily from noon to 3 p.m., the store provides an excellent vocational training opportunity for older students to work on customer service skills, stocking of inventory, and money management.



Community experiences are necessary for a fulfilling and enjoyable life. Thanks to private support, our students have opportunities to go on outings — from dining out to movies to bowling to arcades. Here, a small group attends the new Apex Entertainment Center in Marlborough — a lively venue with go-karts, laser tag, a ropes course, and more.



Last year, the Annual Fund purchased Promethean boards for several of our classrooms. Teachers project an image from a computer onto this whiteboard, and students and teachers interact with the display through touch. Here, a student plays the piano by pressing on keys projected onto the board.

Acts of Generosity

» Simone-Pio Clinton and Dan Clinton

On April 1, 2003, when Simone Pio-Clinton and Dan Clinton's son, Liam, was diagnosed with autism, they felt isolated, frustrated and at times overwhelmed with how best to help their child. They learned as much as they could about applied behavior analysis and The New England Center for Children.

Liam attended two years of pre-school in his public school, showed regression of skills, then in 2005 started in the integrated Kindergarten program at NECC.

"What I like about NECC is that it's not a clinic, and autism is not a sentence. Autism is viewed as part of the individual who can still develop their full potential, and that's different for each child. Liam's potential has been unlocked through years of work," Simone says.

Over the past 12 years, the Clintons have developed a strong partnership with NECC. They helped start the first NECC 5K Walk/Run for Autism, and have participated every year.

"What I like about NECC is that it's not a clinic, and autism is not a sentence. Autism is viewed as part of the individual who can still develop their full potential, and that's different for each child."

—Simone Pio-Clinton

They attend fundraising events because of a shared vision to offer music, art, vocational, and other programs that benefit all NECC students.

Simone points out that financial giving is not the only way to support NECC, and no contribution is too small. She is active on social media, sharing NECC's posts and events, and she is a strong presence in the NECC Parents' Organization, where parents share hopes and fears and dream about future opportunities.



"When I first enrolled Liam in swimming lessons it was out of fear that he would drown if he got away from us at the beach," she says.

Talking to other NECC parents, she learned many had the same fears. They wondered about local pools where students could learn water safety skills and then the conversation grew bigger. *What if NECC had a pool? How much would it cost?* They dreamt big to raise funds to build not just a pool, but a state-of-the-art aquatic center.

"We also talked about music. NECC didn't have regular art and music classes, and now they have the [Dillon Arledge] Student Center" with weekly music and art instruction. "Liam started as nonverbal and now he participates in the choir!" Simone says.

Simone's and Dan's hopes for their son are not unlike most parents'. When they wrote their first vision statement for Liam's IEP, Dan wrote

I want Liam to be happy. They want him to become progressively more independent, to occupy his time, be a productive member of society, and to continue to have a fulfilled life.

"One of the best things about NECC is the vocational program. Liam works at a farm that grows vegetables and fruits that are donated to people in need. He's learned basic farm work, how to cut vegetables, weigh them, wash them. And by contributing in this way, Liam is giving back to the community."

"NECC embraced our child; they have completely changed our life, and our son's life, for the better," she says. "We will always be part of the NECC family and will continue to help fundraise, participate, and spread the word about the wonderful achievements children are making at NECC every day."

Program Updates

Reaching beyond New England

Irene Looi took an unusual route on her way to becoming a behavior analyst. A native of Malaysia, she studied International Marketing and spent two years working in the field before deciding to switch paths.

"I wanted to give back to society, so I went to College of Allied Educators, a school in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, to study learning disabilities and special education," she says.

Soon after, she learned about NECC and decided to travel 9,298 miles to teach and study applied behavior analysis (ABA) at NECC.

"My ultimate mission is to gather all the clinical experience from NECC and bring it home for the development of special needs education and intervention in Malaysia."

While other institutes and universities may provide ABA education, Irene was impressed with NECC's structure, which provides a platform to apply what she's learned to impact real lives immediately.

"I'm no longer just living for myself," she says about her moments spent with students. "It could be a high five for doing a good job, sharing a new music video from Bruno Mars, teaching tooth brushing, guiding to make a PBJ sandwich independently, or buckling their seatbelt so that they're safe. Everything makes a difference."

Irene is one of our participants in a new video series titled Favorite Moments. Favorite Moments highlight staff sharing a cherished experience at NECC. See Irene's #FavoriteMoment on our Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube pages.



"My ultimate mission is to gather all the clinical experience from NECC and bring it home for the development of special needs education and intervention in Malaysia."

Students with autism perform well on educational tasks on some days and less well on others. NECC researchers Andrea Zuchora* and Chata Dickson, PhD, in collaboration with Brooks Thompson and William McIlvane, PhD, of UMASS Medical School's Shriver Center, are conducting a series of studies to better understand why this happens.

They are investigating the possibility that task performance and other behavior may be related to physiological changes that correspond with motivation.

Three typically developing 5-year-old children participated in a preliminary study designed to measure changes in electrodermal activity (EDA) — changes in activity of the sweat glands on a microscopic level — when presented with different rewards, such as a well-liked snack or a small toy.

During the sessions, participants wore the empatica® E4 wireless wristband (www.empatica.com/research/e4), an activity tracker that measures moment-to-moment EDA. By monitoring EDA, researchers learn how individuals respond to potential stressors, which may allow for the

development of individual profiles that will help to predict emotional responsiveness. In this study, more extreme change in EDA was considered to reflect high motivation, and a lack of change in EDA was considered to indicate low motivation.

The researchers concluded that variability in task accuracy (i.e. selecting the correct color on a computer screen) may be influenced by sensitivity to changes in the frequency of rewards, and that performance suffers when motivation is either too high or too low. Changes in EDA may be related to changes in performance in educational tasks, and may affect how much learning is possible at a given point in time.

This technology may be useful when applied to individuals with autism and underscores the need for individualized reinforcement strategies. Continued study using the empatica® device is being conducted with the participation of NECC students.

**Andrea is a #TeamNECC runner through the John Hancock Non Profit Marathon Program. She is fundraising for NECC's Annual Fund and will run the Boston Marathon on Monday, April 16.*



Abu Dhabi Happenings

N ECC-Abu Dhabi continues to provide professional development, outreach, and community service to the Abu Dhabi community. Since the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year, staff have provided four guest lectures, presented four workshops for parents and professionals in the UAE, and participated in professional development opportunities for teachers in a government school in Al Ain. They also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE) to provide internship opportunities for NECC-AD vocational education students, volunteered in community outreach programs, and presented at the 9th International Conference of ABAI in Paris, France.

At ABAI, Dr. Dan Gould chaired a panel discussion, along with Dr. Pamela Olsen, Dr. Joshua Pritchard, and Mr. Vincent Strully, on establishing sustainable ABA services abroad. Dr. Pamela Olsen chaired the symposium titled, "Considerations for International ABA Service Delivery," which featured papers on establishing services in Kuwait, India, Ghana, and the UAE, as well as a paper highlighting preliminary findings of providing bilingual ABA services to children with autism.

NECC-AD has also been an active participant during the UAE's 2017 "Year of Giving," established by President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who urged businesses and individuals to embrace the ideals of community and 'giving back' set forth by the country's founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Encouraged by this initiative, NECC-AD staff continued to volunteer in the community, hosting a booth at the annual Abu Dhabi Science Festival and volunteering at Goals UAE, a parent-led initiative providing afterschool activities, including musical theater, for children with autism. NECC-AD vocational students built props, served as ushers, and served drinks and snacks to the audience during the most recent production, "The Gruffalo."



In the News

Marketplace Radio Online

American Public Media's Marketplace included news about Dunkin' Donuts Community Autism Champion award from NECC.

Los Angeles Daily News

This LA paper mentioned Dunkin' Donuts Community Autism Champion award from NECC.

Chapters, with Jim Derick

This local radio program featured Mike McKenna, whose son, Michael Ryan McKenna, is living with autism and attends NECC. In this episode of Chapters, Mike shared his family's journey with autism and information on important resources.

The Boston Globe

This Globe piece explored NECC's beginnings, highlighting President and CEO Vincent Strully Jr.'s early grant under the Dukakis administration.



CHILDREN OF PROMISE *gala*

November 17, 2017

Nearly 500 business leaders, philanthropists, and NECC supporters enjoyed a record-breaking evening of music, awards, auctions, and stories of inspiration, hosted by KISS 108's Billy Costa. Thanks to you, we raised \$733,898 for the NECC Annual Fund, an increase of 28 percent from last year.

Dunkin' Donuts was honored with the Community Autism Champion Award for their commitment to fundraising for autism education, having raised more than \$2M over the last 20 years. Meaghan McCabe, a former NECC student who went on to great success in the Marlborough, MA public school system and is now attending college, was recognized as NECC's Outstanding Alum.

Kathy Foster and RoseAnn Lovely, both of whom were instrumental in the organization's growth and success, were recognized with Inspirational Leadership awards.



Photography by Pierce Harman Photography

Thank you to our top sponsors!

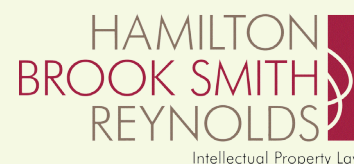
- The Arledge Family
- The Fiorentino Family
- Laura and Harry Slatkin
- Chris and Melissa Beck
- Betsy Dangel
- Thomas and Ann Edwards
- Yie-Hsin Hung and Stephen Farinelli
- Stephanie and Keith Harvell
- The Niedermeyer Family



Building futures. One child at a time.



TIFFANY & Co.



Portland Press Herald

Maine's largest newspaper quoted NECC President and CEO, Vincent Strully, Jr., on the challenges families with children with autism face during summer vacation.

Worcester Telegram

This daily newspaper of Central Massachusetts included NECC's Vocational Services Program in a trend story on work programs for people with autism.



Find us @NECCforAutism

Trending NECC hashtags

- #NECCforAutism
- #ChildrenofPromiseNECC
- #GivingforAutism
- #TeamNECC
- #WorkatNECC
- #NECC5K



The New England Center
for Children®
Autism Education and Research

Boston • Abu Dhabi

33 Turnpike Road
Southborough, MA 01772-2108
www.necc.org

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 243

SAVE THE DATE

Team NECC runs the Boston Marathon

Monday, April 16, 2018
Hopkinton, MA

NECC 5K Walk/Run for Autism

Saturday, May 12, 2018
Southborough, MA
Register at necc.convio.net/5K

Annual Carlos Placido Dunkin' Donuts Golf Classic

Monday, June 4, 2018
Franklin, MA

New Balance Falmouth Road Race

Sunday, August 19, 2018
Falmouth, MA

"The Mike" Golf Invitational

Monday, August 27, 2018
Kingston, MA

Children of Promise Gala

Friday, November 30, 2018
InterContinental, Boston, MA



*Thank
You!*