



Minnesota Hands & Voices FOCUS

—supporting families with kids who have hearing loss—

FEBRUARY 2010

Share your thoughts

We're conducting a brief survey of parents to provide suggestions to audiologists about how to work best with families. The survey has just 6 two-part questions covering time of identification, amplification options, insurance/financing, hearing aid fitting/management, follow-up audiology, and cochlear implant consideration. To share your thoughts and experiences with audiologists, go to:

<http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e2ounflzg4om2mqw/a012ag59t84f4/greeting>

We had a ball skating with our Minnesota Hands & Voices' community last weekend at our Annual Roller Skating party. The crowd was a little smaller—139 people—and very willing to have fun! Besides doing the Hokey Pokey on skates (!), the highlight for our staff is spending time with you and seeing how much your kids have grown. Hope we see you next year, too!

Families enjoy skating party



Here's What's Happening Around Town

Tuesday,
Feb. 16

Join Candace Lindow-Davies for a sneak peak into Cued Speech by visiting the **Practice Cue Clutch** from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Jo Jo's Rise & Wine, 12501 Nicollet Ave. in Burnsville. For more information, email info@cuedspeechminnesota.org.

Thursday,
Feb. 25

MDS-MNSA (Metro Deaf School-Minnesota North Star Academy) offers Teen Night from 6 to 9 p.m. This event is open to all high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing (must show a picture ID). Tickets are \$5 for admission, games, snacks and beverages. Save the date: MDS-MNSA will host Prom Night Saturday, April 17.

Friday,
Feb. 26

ASL-interpretation is provided for **Swedish Song Fest with Folk Singer Ross Sutter** at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 2136 Carter Ave., St. Paul. There are 2 shows: 6:15 and 7:30 p.m. as part of the Music in the Park Series Family Concerts. The shows feature storytelling, dance, singing and traditional Swedish instruments. Tickets are \$6 for all ages. See www.musicintheparkseries.org/familyconcerts.html or call 651-645-5699.

Feb. 26-28

Dreams & Inspirations offers a **retreat for families with children with hearing loss**. The weekend includes a panel presentation for parents plus camp activities such as snow tubing, snow shoeing, and ice fishing. The retreat takes place at Camp Confidence near Brainerd. For details, contact Emily at 866-948-9063 or email emily@dreamsandinspirations.com.

Wednesday,
March 3

The University of Minnesota Medical Center-Fairview holds a **cochlear implant coffee chat from 10 to 11 a.m.** for anyone who has a CI or wants to learn about them. The monthly chat is on the 8th floor of the Phillips Wangenstein Building on the U of M Minneapolis campus. For more information, email jackmaddio@msn.com.

Friday,
March 5

St. Paul Public Schools hosts the **Annual Statewide Dance Party** for High School Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. The dance and pizza are free to students in grades 9-12 with a student ID. Bring money for pop and candy. Each student can bring one guest with a valid student ID. Hearing students are welcome. The dance runs from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Humboldt Senior High School Cafeteria, 30 E. Baker. For more information, call 651.293.8630 x. 2224 or email Rachel.Schultz@spps.org.

Sunday,
March 7

"Until Now: 50 Years, 50 Artists (1960-2010)" is the ASL-interpreted tour at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts at 1 p.m. in the museum lobby. A special exhibition admission is charged. For details, call 612-870-3131 (v); -3132 (tty) or e-mail dhegstro@artsmia.org.

Sunday,
March 14

Naturally Kids, a free, hands-on nature discovery program for parents and children (5 to 12) with any disability, offers "Sappy about Maples" from 1 to 3 p.m. at Fort Snelling State Park in St. Paul. Learn how to tap maple trees and make maple syrup. To request an interpreter or register, see www.naturallykids.org.

Monday,
March 15

Cochlear Americas teams with Fairview to host a seminar on **"Facilitating Spoken Language Development for Young Children with Hearing Loss"** at the Earl Brown Continuing Education Center in St. Paul. Topics include current research, new technologies, and rehabilitation techniques. Registration, which includes morning coffee, lunch and materials, is \$80 for professionals, \$35 for parents, and \$30 for students. To register, go to www.regonline.com/hopeEI.



ASL-Interpreted Performances

Request the VSA discount.

But My Soul Is Rested

Friday, Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. Youth Performance Company at Howard Conn Fine Arts Center; 612-623-9080; www.youthperformanceco.com

Oliver!

Saturday, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m. Lyric Arts, Anoka. 763-422-1838; www.lyricarts.org

Love's Labour's Lost

Sunday, Feb. 28, 2:30 p.m. U of M Rarig Center; 612-624-2345; theatre.umn.edu/utheatredance

New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein

Sunday, Feb. 12, 1 p.m.

Mamma Mia

Sunday, Mar. 14, 1 p.m.

The Wizard of Oz

Sunday, March 28, 1 p.m. Historic Orpheum Theatre, Mpls. www.hennepintheatredistrict.org/guestservices/aslad; 612-373-5650

Macbeth

Friday, Mar. 5 & Thursday, Mar. 11, 7:30 p.m. Guthrie Theater, Mpls.; guthrietheater.org

Hiding in the Open

Sunday, Mar. 7, 2 p.m. History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul; www.historytheatre.com

According To Coyote

Friday, Mar. 12, 7:30 p.m. Children's Theatre, Mpls.; 612-874-0400; www.childrenstheatre.org

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing

Sun., Mar. 14, 2 p.m. & Thu. Mar. 18, 10 a.m. Hopkins Center for the Arts; 952-979-1111; www.stagetheatre.org

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Our mission is to build better lives for children who are deaf or hard of hearing by providing parent-to-parent support.

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In Your Corner

By Candace Lindow-Davies, Minnesota Hands & Voices Coordinator

2010 will prove to be another busy year for MN Hands & Voices. Being busy is just fine because this means more families are getting connected to each other and getting more information to help them better advocate for their children.

MN Hands & Voices has always been concerned about outreach to all families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Getting information and support to families who are English-speaking is tough enough, but reaching families who are from other cultural communities is a significant challenge. The MN departments of Health and Education, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and the MN Commission Serving Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans have banded together to target under-served populations. They are working in collaboration with ECHO (Emergency Community Health Outreach) to create an hour-long television program to be broadcast in various languages to educate families about childhood hearing loss, the need to return for diagnostic evaluation and the importance of early intervention. This program will air each Sunday evening in April at 7 p.m. on Twin Cities Public Television (Channel 2) in this rotation: Spanish on April 4th, Hmong on April 11th, Somali on April 18th and English with ASL and captioning on April 25th. We are so very proud of the parents and professionals in our community who participated in this project. Set your TiVo to capture their television debut! The shows will repeat in May and the months to come and eventually make their way to cable stations, too.

Our staff is also excited about other events coming up:

- Please join me on Tuesday, February 16th from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Cued Speech Association of Minnesota's Cue Clutch (see the calendar section in this newsletter for location). We hope parents who might be interested in learning more about cued speech will come out to meet parents and professionals who cue in this wonderfully casual environment. Stay tuned for other announcements about MN Hands & Voices' staff out and about in the community. Please come and meet our Parent Guides and experience all the resources Minnesota has to offer!
- We are honored to deliver a presentation called "Family-Centered Audiology Care" for the upcoming 2010 MN Academy of Audiology conference. We'll be sharing information from families that completed our survey. If you've filled out a survey--thank you. If you haven't had a chance yet, there's still time. We've included a link on the front page of this *FOCUS*.
- Parents of children who are newly identified as deaf or hard of hearing should put Tuesday, April 20th on your calendars. We are pleased to be collaborating with Lions Children's Hearing Center/U of MN Medical Center-Fairview for an interactive "Next Steps" workshop from 6 to 8:30 p.m. with medical professionals, including specialists in ENT, audiology, infectious disease, and genetics. Look for more details in the next edition of *FOCUS*.
- We are also hoping to offer two events for Spanish-speaking families this year. The first is tentatively set for May 22nd. Stay tuned for more information about this as well.

GMAS scheduling assessments for Spring

Lifetrack Resources' Greater Minnesota Assessment Service (GMAS) is taking applications for psychological assessments and requests for presentations/trainings from now through May.

GMAS provides psychological and social assessments, follow-up, school and family consultation and training to benefit children who are deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing, ages Birth-21 residing in Greater Minnesota, outside the seven-county metro area. Requests can be submitted by families, individuals if over 18 years of age, school personnel, mental health professionals, court order, doctors and social workers. The program's consulting licensed psychologists are familiar with communication modes and will travel statewide conducting assessments and consultations.

The GMAS website (www.lifetrackresources.org/GMAS) has more information about services and the application for psychological assessment. Phone requests can be made by calling 1-866-840-0749 (v) or 1-866-857-2379 (tty).

Workshop focuses on current legislation, provides tips for meeting representatives

PACER and the Coalition for Children with Disabilities will hold an education session about legislative issues Wednesday, Feb. 17 for Minnesota youth with disabilities, parents, and advocates.

"Celebrating Differences, Protecting Rights: Special Education Day at the Capitol" starts with the education session at the Minnesota History Center, Irvine Room, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. in St. Paul from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Participants will hear an update on the 2009 Minnesota legislative session, gain insight into 2010 Minnesota legislative issues, learn valuable skills for sharing their personal stories with their legislators, and then visit their respective legislators at the State Capitol in the afternoon.

Preregistration is required. See www.pacer.org/workshops or contact Kim Kang, Public Policy Director, PACER Center, at Kim.Kang@PACER.org or 952-838-9000.

Summit seeks to improve deaf ed

The 2010 National State Leader's Summit on Deaf Education takes place April 21-23 in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The summit, "Dynamic Strategies for Student Outcomes: Preparing 21st Century Learners," gives state teams an opportunity to learn strategies for using current research to make decisions for improvement as they are applied to accountability for student outcomes in deaf education.

The mission of the national summit is to advance knowledge and leadership through professional and parent stakeholder partnerships that result in collaborative state education systems and improved outcomes for children and youth who are deaf or hard of hearing. The summit joins leaders in education and administration with parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing for the purpose of designing educational systems and services that will successfully launch every deaf or hard of hearing student from birth to young adulthood to his/her highest academic and social potential.

For more information and registration materials, go to www.pepnet.org/iowa_summit_421.asp.

Minnesota Hands & Voices hosts the National Hands & Voices' Leadership Conference in July. The conference provides training for staff of state chapters from all over the country.



The View from Here

Central:

SNAPS (Socialization, Networking, Advocacy and Parent Support) holds a swimming party with a potluck lunch for families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing Sunday, Feb. 7 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Monticello Community Center. Cost is \$4 for children, \$5 for adults. For more information, contact JoLynn Larson at mjkk4@tds.net.

Sign Language at the Mall (SLAM) goes from noon to 3 p.m. Sat., Feb. 13 at the Crossroads Mall Food Court in St. Cloud.

Learn how to improve your child's IEP at a free one-night workshop offered by PACER. IDEA: Understanding the IEP takes place from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18 at Princeton High School, and is repeated Feb. 25 at the Country Inn-St. Cloud East. Register at www.pacer.org/workshops.



SNAPS hosts a benefit showing of "Gerald," an ASL film, at 7 p.m. Friday, March 19 at Sartell High School. Tickets are \$11. For a synopsis of the film, see www.aslfilms.com.

A Deaf and Hard of Hearing Educational Workshop takes place Tuesday, April 6 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Monticello Middle School. Mary Hartnett, Executive Director, Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans (MCDHH) is presenting. Look for more details next month.

Southwest:

American Sign Language Storytime goes from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 6 and Saturday, March 6 at South Central Service Cooperative, 2075 Lookout Drive, North Mankato.

The Annual Family Getaway in Mankato is March 5-6. For details, contact Parent Guide Kristin Hemstock at Kristinh@lifetrackresources.org.



Upper Northwest:

Winter Connect 2 for DHH students and their families happens Feb. 11 and 12 in Thief River Falls. For details, contact Parent Guide Magen Russillo at MagenR@lifetrackresources.org.



Northwest:

Valentines Day D/HH Family Skate at the Willmar Civic Center Arena goes from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14. Cost is \$2/person. Limited skates available to rent, or bring your own. No RSVP needed.



Parent Empowerment & Networking Support (PENS) for families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing meets Monday, March 1 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Willmar High School. Kids (PENS' Pals!) have social time with supervised games and fun-filled activities while parents join in an open discussion of issues. Supper is provided. RSVP by Feb. 22 to Jill Rohman at 320-894-2945 or email jill.rohman@swsc.org.

The Plains Art Museum in Fargo is the site for the Great Art Free-for-All with deaf performer Toni Faribanks Saturday, March 6. See www.plainsart.org for details.



Northeast:

A panel of adults with hearing loss discusses related issues on Thursday, Feb. 25 at the Secondary Technical Center, 802 E. Central Entrance, Duluth. An informal dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m., followed by the presentation and discussion at 6:30. During the presentation, kids will have activities in a separate room. To register or get more details, contact NE Parent Guide Curt Leitz, 1-866-750-4421 or CurtL@lifetrackresources.org.

"The Elephant and the Monkeys: Living with a Child with Hearing Loss" is a free workshop for parents, caregivers and professionals from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11 at Rainy River Community College Room # H118 Humanities Building (park in main lot to the left) in International Falls. Psychologist Dr. Robin Santa-Teresa will talk about additional factors that impact families with children who have hearing loss. The workshop includes a light meal. Sponsors are the Greater Minnesota Assessment Service, Minnesota Hands & Voices, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. RSVP by Monday, Feb. 8 to Curt Leitz at 866-750-4421 or curtl@lifetrackresources.org.

Writing contest ends soon

High school sophomores and juniors who are deaf or hard of hearing can enter the 5th annual Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) SpiRIT Writing Contest. The deadline to enter is March 15.

Winners will have their choice of free travel and registration to the 6-day Explore Your Future program this summer at RIT or a \$500 cash prize.

Entry forms and contest details are at www.ntid.rit.edu/prospective/writing/.

Virnig takes new job with instant translation company

Sean Virnig, the former Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, has joined the management team of SpeechGear's Auditory Sciences subsidiary as their Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Virnig also resigned his position as the Director of Education Outreach for the Commission of Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans to pursue this opportunity with SpeechGear.

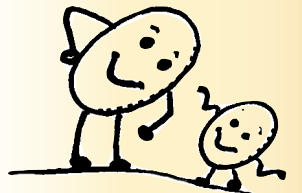
SpeechGear, Inc., which develops instant language translation products, is launching a product called Interact-AS, designed specifically for the deaf and hard of hearing communities. The software, which costs \$750, can be loaded on a PC or purchased with a Tablet PC, making it easily portable. Conversations are made possible because spoken words are instantly displayed on the screen, while everything that is typed or written is spoken out loud. Users can choose a male or female speaking voice. The Interact-AS system has a Visualize tab to show pictures, video clips, or sketches. The program also can save a transcript of a conversation.

Auditory Sciences is a subsidiary of SpeechGear, which has a line of products that instantly translate spoken and written words. The company's headquarters are in Northfield. To learn more about Interact-AS, see www.auditorysciences.com or call 507-645-8924.

Spring Workshop planned

Melissa Watson, the founder of Deaf2Deaf, a nonprofit agency that provides counseling, behavior analysis, case management, training, and consulting, will be the featured presenter for the annual Spring Workshop May 21 sponsored by Regions Hospital's Health and Wellness Program.

The day-long workshop will take place at the Continuing Education Center at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus. For a flyer and registration information, email Kristen.L.Swan@HealthPartners.com.



A Little Grin

By Melissa McNamer

One Sunday last summer, we were in church listening to the homily about opening our minds. One example that was used was how Jesus made a blind man see and a deaf man hear. As the priest went into the part about making a deaf man hear, I saw my 6-year-old son, who has hearing loss, wrinkle his forehead and look up at me. A moment later he tugged on my arm. I bent down, preparing myself for his question. Then he whispered loudly into my ear, "Mom, when we get home can I do the Slip 'n Slide?" A small wave of relief washed over me as I agreed that this would be a great idea.

New social network site created for deaf people

There's a new social networking site to help deaf and hard-of-hearing people find friends on the Internet.

DeafPals.com was created by Patrick Petronelli, 28, of Quincy, Mass., who became frustrated trying to find other deaf people on Facebook and Myspace. Already, more than 700 people from more than three dozen countries have joined his free networking site since it opened in December.

Petronelli, who was born hard of hearing, majored in Web Development at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf. After graduation in 2005, he moved back to the Boston area to be closer to his family, but said he missed the social atmosphere of being around so many deaf people. So he used the skills he learned at RIT/NTID to make DeafPals.com.

Members can search for others by age range and geographic location, and send emails through their profiles. Parents of children who are deaf also could use the site to learn more about issues their children will face. Mostly, though, the site allows members to connect with others they can relate to, Petronelli said.

Online forum posts new topic

"Technology-Enhanced Shared Reading" is the topic at the Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education website through Feb. 21.

To read a summary of the research and posts by parents and teachers, you must first create a login password at www.wiki.educ.msu.edu. Click on the word "Join" in the upper right-hand corner. Then click on Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education: Author's Corner. To see the current topic, just click on "Current" in the menu on the left. In the future, you can go directly to <http://jdsde-author-corner.wiki.educ.msu.edu> and sign in using your login password.

New e-publication focuses on signing community

A new online/email publication for the signing community has its roots in the Twin Cities.

"Clerc Scar" was created by Adrean and John Lee Clark, publishers of the *Tactile Mind Weekly*, a magazine which was produced between 2003 and 2006. Like the *Tactile Mind*, "Clerc Scar" includes writing by members of the signing community. It also includes video clips in ASL, making it a great resource for ASL students, interpreters and anyone interested in sign language.

The name pays homage to Laurent Clerc, the Deaf teacher who left his native France in 1816 to co-found the first successful school for the Deaf in North America. According to the Clarks, "Clerc left such a mark on the signing community that we can feel it today. While it will be impossible to be as influential as he was, we hope that the essays, poetry, fiction, and artwork published in Clerc Scar will, as we sign it, "scar" readers' minds—and we mean that in a good way!"

To see recent editions of Clerc Scar or to submit articles, go to www.clercscar.com. Email subscriptions are free.

Workshop makes science fun

PACER offers a free workshop April 13 from 6 to 8 p.m. for middle school girls who have a disability.

"Tech For Girls: Be a CSI!" invites girls to be a crime scene investigator and solve a mock crime using forensic science. The workshop is an extension of PACER's EXCITE program to encourage girls' interest in science.

To register for this workshop, see www.pacer.org/workshops.



Dad's Viewpoint

By Curt Leitz, NE Parent Guide

Perhaps my favorite post-holiday task is taking down the lights and decorations perched on the most inaccessible parts of a house: roof overhangs, window trellises,

high soffits, and so forth. These are the places designers and builders put on a house to remind men of their aging bodies and decaying physical skills, a fact that can be easy to forget in late fall when we are able to choose a clear, calm, and dry day to mount the decorations. That day, I feel spry and alive hanging off the edge of the roof. Come January, with treacherous ice and piercing winds added to the mix, I feel old and frail. Suddenly I find myself thinking about things like whether I ever did get my will signed and notarized, when I last told my kids that I loved them, and what I would do differently with my life should I get down safely.

This is why I don't make New Year's resolutions. I know that about a week later, I'll either die taking down the decorations (thus breaking all my resolutions), or my toes will find the top of the ladder, I'll ease my weight off the roof, and both my feet and the ladder will hold steady. In the process, I'll have had the perfect opportunity to reflect on what's important in life. Why fake the process in the safety of your own home on New Year's Eve, when you can wait a week and have the motivating factors of height and gravity giving your thoughts a bit of urgency?

So it was again in 2010. No resolutions for me, but from the rooftop some of the conflicts I've had with my pre-teen daughter look as small and insignificant as the stunted bushes by the front door that the dog pees on all winter. Suddenly it's clear that my wife is right, that my daughter and I butt heads because we're just the same: neither one of us likes much being told what to do and how to do it, but we each have specific ideas about the best way to do most anything.

I'd become trapped by the details of my day-to-day parenting, rather than allowing core values to guide my decisions. It seems like just yesterday my daughter fit in my two hands, and I'd vowed to parent according to a select few principles. I want to show my kids unconditional love. I want to foster their independence. I want them to take responsibility for their actions. I want them to be kind to others. Finally, I want my kids to grasp the paradox of being at once unique and insignificant in the universe.

Five things. When my daughters were infants, I figured if I could help them internalize these principles, they'd have the ability to work out life's details themselves. Now, ten years later, I find that I myself need to let go of the details. I need to return to rock-solid ideas—like always considering that my wife might be right and always asking someone to hold onto a ladder I'm using.

I peer over the icy gutter and size up the top step of the ladder. Swinging my legs out into space, I recommit to my guiding principles.

Device allows deaf to feel sounds

An engineering instructor at a Swedish university has created a device that converts sounds to vibrations that a person who is deaf can feel rather than hear.

The device, named Monitor, is being developed by Parivash Ranjbar, an engineering researcher at Örebro University in Sweden. Monitor consists of a microphone that picks up sounds, a processor that converts them, and a vibrating part to convey them.

Normal human hearing can perceive sound frequencies between 20 and 20,000 Hz, while skin cannot sense frequencies higher than 800 Hz. Therefore, Monitor registers sounds and converts them to lower frequencies that the skin can perceive as vibrations, without the sound losing its distinct character.

Federal website now loans captioned media only to 'Level 2' members

Membership rules have changed for using the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP), requiring all members to re-register this year to become Level 2 members to use the free-loan library or online media service.

DCMP's stated purpose is to benefit students who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. Qualified Level 2 members must serve at least one such student, and can be K-12 school personnel, teachers- and interpreters-in-training, or families. Membership registration is available at www.dcmp.org. The service is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and run by the National Association of the Deaf.

The DCMP media library has over 4,000 described and captioned media titles that can be shipped to homes or schools or watched online. Members can browse the library by title or topic. Clicking a topic reveals all the related titles in that category. Each title links to a descriptive page that provides detailed information, including which formats are available, the running time, appropriate grade level, production year, producer, whether there is an available lesson guide, and under which subject areas the title is categorized. The updated website also lets members save a list of favorites.

New video cell phone making waves

A new video-capable cell phone that has not yet reached the market has been chosen as #2 in a top 10 list of this year's coolest gadgets by CNNMoney.com.

The Saygus VPhone promises to be the nation's first two-way video mobile phone. Video will run at 24-30 frames per second, which is faster than the industry standard of 24 frames per second for movies.

The phone runs on the Android 2.0 platform, and can run all Android applications. The Saygus website, www.saygus.com/comm_vphone, lists all the phone's features, calling it "The World's First Smartphone/PCDA – Personal Communications Data Assistant – Real-Time Video, Internet, 802.11b/g, Bluetooth, VMS- Video Messaging Service." Created by Chad Sayers of the new wireless firm Saygus, the VPhone is being developed through Verizon's Open Development Initiative.

Grammy Award-winner Lyle Lovett will perform at PACER's Annual Benefit auction and dinner at the Minneapolis Convention Center Saturday, May 8. The event helps fund PACER's work for families with children who have disabilities. Make reservations at www.pacer.org/benefit.