



Autism
Community
Network

PRESS RELEASE

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Autism Community Network Announces Pilot Program to Serve Displaced Children

Autism Community Network (ACN) Executive Director Jessica H. Franco, PhD, has announced that ACN will begin operating a classroom-based day program to provide children ages 3 – 8 intensive behavioral therapy 25 hours each week. ACN board and staff developed this program in order to provide crucial, long-term services to the children who were displaced after Treehouse Pediatrics suddenly ceased operations in mid-December.

- For:** • Children displaced by provider closure
- Who:** • Two anonymous funders and The USAA Foundation
• Autism Community Network • One for Autism Academy
- What:** • ACN Pilot Program to provide intensive, classroom-based autism therapy
- Where:** • 12003 Huebner Road, San Antonio, Texas 78230
- When:** • Begins January 12, 2010 – Ends May 28, 2010

Two anonymous donors and The USAA Foundation provided emergency funding for this project, which will run from January 12 until May 28, 2010, to serve the displaced students. In order to meet the children's immediate needs quickly, ACN has partnered with One for Autism Academy, which runs a similar program and is accredited by the Texas Education Agency.

Dr. Franco, a leading authority on speech and language disorders related to autism, has helped establish similar day programs in Texas, Colorado, and Idaho. In a recent meeting with parents whose children were affected by the closure, along with partner providers, she said:

“Autism Community Network was created to fill gaps in autism services. As difficult as this closure has been for everyone involved, I want you to know that ACN is here to make sure your children get the services they need, as quickly as possible. You also can be assured that for the longer term, ACN is considering options for continuing day program services.”

During the pilot project's five-month term, ACN and community leaders will develop a strategic plan based on the community's need for a day program. Autism Community Network itself was founded in 2008 through a similar process, after a consortium of healthcare funding entities and autism service providers conducted a two-year needs assessment. That study concluded that San Antonio's greatest need was for a top-tier autism diagnosis and treatment provider that could also serve as an autism community network hub, in order to better coordinate the city's autism services, referrals, and information.

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INFO LINKS:

Additional ACN Day School pilot program details are available via:

- Email: covita@autismcommunitynetwork-sa.org
- Via Download: www.autismcommunitynetwork-sa.org